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MEMORIAL EDITION

OF

COLLECTED WORKS

OF

W. J. FOX.

VOL. XI.

REPORTS OF MISCELLANEOUS LECTURES

AT

SOUTH-PLACE CHAPEL, FINSBURY.

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PREFACE.

The concluding Lectures in Vol X., entitled "Miscellaneous," and also the Lectures in this and the succeeding volume, have been printed from Ms. reports which had not the advantage of Mr. Fox's supervision, and which the editors found in a very imperfect state. An examination of a mass of matter in this condition led to the conclusion that, while it was impossible to restore many passages so as to give an adequate representation of the beauty of Mr. Fox's style, a large portion of the Mss. might be so far revised as to reproduce with fidelity many of his best thoughts upon a variety of interesting and important topics. In accomplishing this portion of their task, the editors have spared no pains; and they beg to state, for the information of subscribers, that the delay in the issue of the last three volumes has been occasioned by the great amount of labour which the preparation of these Lectures for the press has unavoidably entailed.

The originality of Mr. Fox's style made his speeches and lectures very difficult subjects for the reporter's art. His method of building up his arguments and illustrations in a series of culminating passages, terminating in an unexpected climax, bewildered those who attempted to follow him by the ordinary methods of reporting; and in the Mss. from which these Lectures have been edited, it was a rare thing to find half a dozen successive paragraphs without some confusion and error. In many cases, quotations, which could not be omitted without

injury to the sense, were only indicated by a few words, without reference to the source from whence they were taken; and in others, the names of authors were misspelt, or the titles of their books given incorrectly. Difficulties of this sort could only be overcome by a great expenditure of time and trouble.

The plan followed by the editors has been, to restore defective passages whenever the Mss. supplied sufficient indications to do so correctly; and to omit, rather than to attempt to rewrite, other passages that were in hopeless confusion.

In justice to Mr. Fox, the Lectures which he did not prepare for the press have been kept distinct, in this edition, from those which he published during his lifetime, or left in an approximately complete state; and notwithstanding some defects which a critical eye may discern in the former class, they will be found worthy not only of preservation and diligent perusal, but of their author's fame.

November 1867.

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THE

COLLECTED WORKS OF W. J. FOX.

ON TRUTH.

No. I.

April 1st, 1838.

"Before thy mystic altar, heavenly Truth,
I kneel in manhood as I knelt in youth:
Thus let me kneel till this dull frame decay,
And life's last shades be brighten'd by thy ray—
So shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
Soar without bound, without consuming glow."

THESE lines are very characteristic of the mind that produced them,—a mind which, if not one of the most vigorous, was yet one of the simplest and purest—which, if not one of the loftiest, was yet one of the most lucid and expanded—that the literature of our country has produced. They are the composition of Sir William Jones; and they well describe both the earnestness and the simplicity, and blended with these something of the feebleness, with which, through his meritorious life, he devoted himself to the acquisition of many kinds of knowledge: and it is not uncharacteristic, that their expression is in some slight degree conventional —that they are tinged with the poetical dialect of those days—and also that they are not altogether original, but avowedly founded on the language used by another and much more nervous writer. They are avowedly imitated from a sentence which seems to me a more genuine and strong expression of the same feeling: "He who would make a real progress in knowledge must dedicate his age

as well as his youth—his latter growth as well as first fruits—at the altar of truth."

Such is the feeling which should characterise every intellect that is in earnest to realise the purposes for which it was created, and to attain the dignity of which its Creator has rendered it susceptible. The love of Truth is a noble passion in almost all its infinite variety of manifestations. It is one which commands our reverence, and excites our sympathy—it is one which, as we trace it through the pursuits in which men have engaged, the toil which they have accomplished, the privations they have borne, the difficulties they have surmounted, and the ends which at length they have realised, gives us a better impression of the inherent nobleness and power of our nature than any other exhibition of it that observation can present to our notice, or that history records. We regard and reverence it in a case like that of Ferguson, debarred from the ordinary means of pursuing scientific inquiries,—kept without books that would have been sources of instruction to him,—and quietly realising what manly minds had done before him, though he was totally unaware of it, and actually reinventing the elementary propositions and theorems of geometry. We reverence it in displays the most contrasted with this—in the works of some great master of the pictorial art, who endeavours to realise in the expression of his figures that combination of confidence with agony, of veneration with acute emotion, which commands the admiration of successive generations, and makes an irresistible appeal to the sympathies of every human heart; or when we see it in the traveller, whose unslaked desire of knowledge still leads him from region to region beyond the boundaries of the civilised world—in such men as Mungo Park, braving the dangers to be encountered amongst barbarian tribes, or, in the vast and solitary deserts which he had to cross, sustaining himself by his mental energy, and his vivid and eager desire to behold yet more, under circumstances which would have crushed a more athletic frame, that did not enshrine so enthusiastic a spirit,—and at last reaping his reward as he knelt down on the banks of the Niger, and blessed God that he had arrived there, though he might not live to tell it, and that he saw its waters flowing before him majestically to the eastward, as

broad as the Thames at Westminster; or when we see it in the mind that studies the actions of intellect and character rather than the truths of material existence and event—when we see a philosophical historian like Carlyle, as the course of his narrative leads him to trace the infinite diversity of human character, paying his homage to the true man, whatever the idiosyncrasy of that man may be,—recognising, wherever he finds it, truth to nature, and displaying that truth in all its worth, grandeur, and influence, —even where it is a nature bearing, as its peculiar feature, indications that are altogether at variance with his own tendencies and his own philosophy.

We reverence this love of truth when it seeks for the minutest objects, as well as in the pursuit of the mightiest —when we see it in the naturalist, like White of Selborne, watching the motions of insects and the flight of birds—noticing the mode in which they build their habitations, seeing the time and manner of their migration, observing their food, and chronicling their daily and their nightly habitudes. And with very different feelings do we recognise it in those whose studies are directed to human interests instead of animal or material combinations, as when we imagine a Bentham, in the solitude of his study, bringing the great powers of his mind to elucidate the influence of legislation and the tendency of morals, and endeavouring, through the application of great and broad principles, clearly ascertained and extensively applied, to rear, by the hand of the law, the fabric of felicity. Every where, in every individual, in every point of view, directed to every pursuit, we esteem the love of Truth a noble passion. And what, then, is the object of this passion? What is Truth? It is a question which was put to Christ, and which has been put many thousand times before and after, and perhaps generally with as little of direct reply as the evangelists record to have been given in that instance. But apocryphal sometimes suggests that which is not found in canonical authority. Although neither Matthew nor Mark, although neither Luke nor John, has recorded any direct answer to that question, there is one in an apocryphal gospel; and as the conversation stands, when Pilate asked, "What is Truth?" Christ replied, "Truth is that which a man troweth"—an answer of which much use was made for

etymological purposes, and through etymology for philosophical purposes, by the late Horne Tooke.

The answer, whether it be fictitious or genuine, conveys with it a most important lesson. Truth, as in the etymology of the word, so in the reality of it—Truth is that which a man troweth; Truth to every man is that which he honestly apprehends, by the exercise of his bodily senses and his intellectual powers, of the world around him and the world within him. He can have no other standard than this—he cannot fall short of or go beyond this; nor ought he to expect more of his brother man. Each must have his own standard; and dwelling, as we do, as brethren on the earth, with a common right and charter of inheritance from our common and universal Creator, this is the toleration, if toleration it may be called, which we are bound to exercise towards one another,—I would rather say, it is the universal right, which we should on no account invade in one another. In this way, even in what some may deem the greatest absurdities, or in what they may reckon the worst theories, there is still that which should silence the assumptions of dogmatism, and which should disarm the malignity of bigotry. The tenets of an ancient sect are described thus by a modern poet:

"All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams, are true;"

it is said also that

"All truth is change,"

and that

"All things flow like a stream."

Then, are there no bounds to this change? is there nothing fixed in what seems this infinite flow? I reply, Yes, there are two fixed elements by which this change, the result of individuality, is limited; which arise to restrain it, as the everlasting rocks present their barriers to the ocean, and say: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." The world without us is the same enduringly—it changes not with men's fancies—it yields not to their mistakes—it varies not with their impressions. There they abide, the external works of God,—external to us,—as much his works as we are, as much the emanations of his eternal and infinite

intelligence as we are. This is one element of durability—this is one restraint on the boundlessness of change in the development of individuality. And another source of identity, of permanence, is in our own nature. Great as are the diversities of human nature, still greater are its common principles. The construction of our bodily senses,—the arrangement, or power, or principle, or whatever it be, that gives the faculties of thought and feeling,—these are essentially the same—the same in savage life as they are in civilised man—the same in the remotest regions of the world—the same in the earliest periods of history as they are at the present time: whatever appeals to this is sure of its response from humanity in all countries and through all times.

Here, then, we find the identification to a certain extent of truth and of knowledge. In proportion as the laws of the material universe and the laws of the mental and moral world are ascertained—as observation and classification extend from time to time—we arrive at what may be called the principles of creation, the rules of divine action, which uniformly and universally hold true. The truths which in mental science approach the nearest to the demonstrable truths of form and figure, command a like growing credence. Knowledge advances; and as knowledge advances, that which one man troweth becomes more and more, in these particulars, like what another man troweth, until there obtain throughout the world certain notions, which, acting upon all with a common influence, lead to common results. Hence the progress of knowledge and the progress of truth are described in the same terms; and there are some beautiful thoughts on these advances in a poem entitled "Truth," a short lyric by Alexander Hume, addressed to Allan Cunningham, which describes the progress of knowledge as identified with truth.*

And this description is true not merely of knowledge, not merely of the unfolding of the principles of moral science, but also of knowledge as realised by the human mind—of knowledge that is converted into truth by the agency of individual thought and feeling. Hence it records not merely the discovery of this or that proposition, this or that principle in mechanics; but these

* No trace of these lines has been found.—Ed.

are surrounded with other influences,—with the active agencies of humanity in building up society, with the attachment to principles of equity and benevolence in those by whom society is constituted, with the generous impulses that lead a patriot to risk his life in destroying the power by which his country is oppressed, in whatever impels man to guide the world onwards—not merely by making men know more, but by making them realise that knowledge intensely in their intellects, emotions, and actions, and thus show it as the truth of their own being, in harmony with the world which God has constituted for them to exist in. The love of truth and the love of knowledge, within these boundaries, are therefore identical. There are points at which we may consider them as parting. There is an aimless curiosity, a desire to know that which, when attained, is not worth the knowledge. It was a disposition of this sort that evoked the rebuke of Christ to the Apostle Peter. Our Lord had warned him of his own death, his death as a martyr to the religion whose apostle he was constituted; and no sooner was this communicated, than Peter, looking at the Apostle John, began to ask, "And, Lord, what shall this man do?" To which the reply came, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." And continually is there a disposition to inquire into the habits, occupations, circumstances of others, to which this rebuke might be repeated, "What is that to thee?" There is no love of truth in the craving for this species of knowledge; still, though difficult to conceive, it is not impossible to imagine that there might be circumstances, and there might be minds, in which even this sort of information was worth something, and there may be instances in which the merest trifle may be made to afford indications of an important kind. For instance, in the history preserved in the book of Judges, we find the hero and patriot Gideon selecting 300 men from a body of 10,000, on account of an apparently slight difference. The country was overborne by the Midianite invasion—a large hostile army was in the neighbourhood; he had 10,000 men with him, but they were men on whom he could not implicitly rely, and he contemplated a daring enterprise. Having led them to the water-side, and watched them in their actions, he selected 300 who did not indulge themselves by kneeling

down to drink of the stream in an easy position, but who took just sufficient to satisfy their thirst in the most prompt manner; and did with them what the 10,000 would, probably, have failed to accomplish: he led them to a night surprise of the Midianite host, and delivered the country from the presence of its armed oppressors.

There are minds in which the merest trifle may grow up into an important truth, in which it may connect itself with some portion of the philosophy of human nature, and thus the slightest seed may become the tall and spreading tree, like that recorded in the parable, extending the shade of its arms over many a region, and yielding refreshment and repose; whilst there are other minds on which, from their want of realisation, from their not transforming knowledge into truth, the grandest facts, the mightiest phenomena of the solar or starry system, produce no impression, lead to no practical result.

If mere curiosity be not a love of truth, neither is it love of truth to desire to be thought by others a lover or possessor of the truth. I knew an instance of a mathematician who was unable to overcome his disbelief in the theory of Fluxions, but who proceeded as if no such thing were in existence; and when it was objected that all his calculations, all his demonstrations, could only, in his own estimation, be hypothetical, and probably fallacious, replied, that it might be so; but the theory was generally admitted in the country, and therefore he acted upon it. And such has been too commonly the course pursued by men who desire the reputation of wisdom rather than its possession.

Learning has often been found to sink from reality to conventionalism. It has a tendency to do so as knowledge enlarges its bounds, and as new and valuable fields are opened for human investigation. The love of classic literature was once an instance of the love of truth, and a precious boon to the world. It was so when, with a knowledge of ancient writers, their spirit seemed also to revive, and to be outpoured upon the students of their pages, and when men began to struggle against the old despotism over the intellect, with faculties strong in the power that had been excited by their contemplation: and yet, in a few generations, this has degenerated into a mere fashionable sort of education, thought needful for every one who aspires to the

rank of a gentleman; while all that is really valuable in the philosophy and poetry of these ancient writers appears stripped of its influence, and their names merely serve to gild pretensions that have no solid ground whereon to rest.

It was the same before this with the logic of the schools. That was once deemed education, learning, as classic instruction now is. Originally, that logic was a weapon of acute edge and mighty power, by which sophisms were detected, and truth, if not discovered, was defended, advocated, and advanced; but it sank into a learned juggle, occupying the same position when it was outworn that the old classic form of scholarship does now, when science is treading upon its heels and about to ascend its throne.

How well and benignantly has Providence led on the human race, conducting it to the attainment of knowledge, and, above that, to the love of truth, by the circumstances of its condition! Necessity drives to invention. The pleasure derived from truth makes the soul aspire towards its possession, and by this a continuous progress has been realised, of which the aberrations are but slight compared with the onward course, from the earliest period to the present time. The need of a fresh demarcation of the ground, after the overflowing of the Nile, led to the cultivation of the science of geometry by the Egyptians. Here was the occasion of necessity. The Chaldean shepherds, in their beautiful climate, watching their flocks by night, watched the stars of heaven also, noted their different lustre and their various motions, and from the simple enjoyment which this afforded them they became the parents of the science of astronomy, in the same way as, under the influence of necessity, the Egyptians became the authors of the science of geometry. And this may be traced in the formation of society, in the earliest religious notions, in the growth of governmental power, in the different kinds of organisation, from that of the clan to the complicated relations of the most extended empire: they show to us advances in social science, as the others did in moral science. God leads on the human race, and the training which conducts them in their progress is analogous to that which is exercised over every individual mind. There is, as

the love of truth is honestly felt, an exquisite delight in the realisation within us of that which we know corresponds and harmonises with the great system of the Creator without us, that cannot fail to stimulate the mind, and which is in itself the presage of important advancement.

Falsehood, or known deviation from the correspondence of our conviction with realities, is what man is so averse to, from the associations that are necessarily generated within him, that we find him, in almost every case, driven into it by the exercise of external power. Man naturally expects truth from others, and is ready to believe what he is told. The argument of Hume against miracles is not, indeed, framed on this supposition. He resolves belief in testimony into experience. His theory was, that a child believed what others said to be the case in some instances, because it had previously compared what they said with reality in other cases, and found there was a correspondence. Now, this artificial and deliberate process does not agree with the observations of any who have noticed the development of youthful minds. Campbell demolished Hume's arguments by a directly opposite assumption; but an assumption that at once appeals to the experience of the parent and the teacher. He said it was not belief, but disbelief or doubt, that was the result of experience—that a child believes every thing that he is told, until he discerns that a falsehood has been told him; and the disposition which tends to believe must also be the disposition that tends to speak truth. But what is the conduct too frequently pursued in training youth? Fear makes them false—the fear of punishment, which does not tend to produce any good results, but which is inflicted by the punishing party in the hope of precluding the recurrence of inconvenience to himself. A premium is thus held out for falsehood, and it becomes associated with impunity and success. And so it is in after life. Simplicity and uniform truthfulness are, in too many particulars, not countenanced either by the practices of society or by the enactments of legislation. Falsehood is notoriously the vice of slaves. Why is it so, but because they are subject to an oppression in which truth has no honour—wherein the rights of human nature are not recognised—where the object of those

who rule is to realise as much as possible at the expense of others? Even the name of religion is brought into this nefarious and unhallowed process; men are terrified from opinions, from full and free investigation, by the threat of future punishment,—they have ideas of anguish associated with this or that set of dogmas; and while thus driven to falsehood on the one hand, they are allured to it on the other by the repute which certain opinions confer,—by their being recognised as possessors of orthodoxy, as those who know the mind of Christ and of God, and who, by the enunciation of a certain belief, gain a title thereby to recognition on earth and to glory in heaven.

Nature, left to itself, abhors a lie. The early education of nature—every thing in which the artificial and conventional systems of man do not interfere—tends to connect our associations most strongly and most lovingly with seeming to be that which we really are, with saying that which we really think, with doing that which we really desire. Truth is well known to be a virtue of savage life; and the Indian mother is held forth as an example, for her eulogy on her son, slain in battle, that he never told a lie. In proportion as man's avowed *morale* is true to the dictates of his own nature, and as it guides him according to those dictates in his attitude towards others, and in his anticipation of futurity, does he realise that virtue which is the only basis of happiness. Wollaston has founded his theory of morals entirely on the nature of truth. He contends that every vice is falsehood,—that the ingrate is vicious, because he acts towards his benefactor as if he were not a benefactor,—that the thief or robber is vicious, because he acts towards other members of the same community as if they were not members of that community, and have not thereby a right to his performance of kind offices and his abstinence from injurious ones,—and that an irreligious man is vicious, because he does not act up to the duty implied in the relation of the Creator and the creature. It has been justly observed, that this theory does not go deep enough, but leaves unsolved the reason why certain feelings are appropriate to these relations. That reason must be sought in the truth of human nature. It is a proverbial expression, that truth lies hidden in the bottom of a well. It does so in the well-spring of the human

heart—that unfailing source of truth and good and beauty—which, until its waters are poisoned, flows on refreshingly and cheerfully and fertilisingly over the region through which its course is taken. It is in these depths that we must realise what belongs to the capacity of our faculties, to their best exercise, and their most blessed results.

Nature, science, Christ, God, are our instructors; but they only instruct us as their monitions become identified with the working of our hearts. That Christ should ascend, says the apostle, it was necessary that he should first descend into the lower parts of the earth. For external reality to become morally efficient on man, it must find its way into his own being—it must become identified with his own intellectual and moral existence. Then can it reascend, then can it fill the widest sphere with its beneficent influence. There is thus much of spiritual truth in the theological dogma, that God descends and becomes incarnate in humanity, to accomplish its redemption, and raise it to its highest pitch of glory. But this holy influence will not be felt by him who elevates the animal above the intellectual part of his being; who sacrifices imagination and feeling to the predominance of a mere hard logic, without considering the diversity of our faculties, and their several claims—who, in his intercourse with society, fails to see that no immoral relation, such as the condition of the tyrant and the slave, of the robber and the injured, is the work of nature—but that there do arise out of nature relations of superiority and inferiority, and therefore feelings of reverence and veneration—that there do arise out of the constitution of nature those individual obligations which should induce affection—that there is in the constitution of human beings that charity which should prompt all to do to others as they would that others should do unto them.

Those that are more wisely guided will avoid the rocks on which others split, and preserve truth to their nature through all the conditions of social existence and exertion; and they will not be apt to believe that their course terminates, that their conscience is extinguished, when they reach the dissolution of the grave,—but, cherishing the aspirations—themselves the indication and presage of the

truth—that arise within us of an interminably prolonged existence beyond this life, they will also act in truthfulness to their own destiny, and with a dignity becoming the worth and brightness of their prospects.

I noticed, in an early part of the lecture, that the canonical gospels do not record the answer of Christ, "Truth is that which a man troweth," in reply to the question, "What is truth?" put to him by the Roman judge. But if they do not record it, they yet have ascribed language to Christ, in immediate sequence to that question, which may, perhaps, come to a similar result. They represent him as saying, "To this end was I born, and for this cause did I come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." And to the truth, in the view now taken of it, did he bear witness throughout the whole of his course, from the manger of Bethlehem, which was his cradle, to the garden of the Arimathean, in which he found his grave. He was bearing witness to the truth when, a child, he sat in the temple and questioned the learned doctors of the Jewish law, and inquired of them their interpretation of the scriptures of the ancients; he was bearing witness to the truth when he abode with his parents at Nazareth, in lowliness of mind, and with patient training for his great work, labouring at his father's occupation, and seeking no premature distinctions from his fellow-men; he was bearing witness to the truth when he retired into the wilderness, in a solitude of forty days' duration, to ponder over the great work before him, to weigh well all its bearings, and to realise his own identification with the interests and the redemption of humanity; he was bearing witness to the truth when he came forth, and, on the Mount, put aside the casuistry and superstition and immorality of the old interpreters of the law, and told men to appeal to their own hearts in construing the precepts Moses had delivered to them; he was bearing witness to the truth when he turned aside from the powerful and elevated hypocrites of Judæa, its mighty rulers, to consort with the poor and the despised,—when he welcomed the outcast and the deserted,—when he laid his hand on little children and blessed them, although his disciples would have restrained him,—and when he looked around even upon inanimate objects, and rejoiced in the lilies of the

field, as illustrating the providence of Heaven, and eclipsing the highest earthly glory; he was bearing witness to the truth when he uttered the parables, whose simplicity and pathos must commend them to the heart of man while humanity is constituted as it now is,—which must yield lessons of knowledge and draw tears of gladness from generation to generation;—in all these, and through the whole course of his laborious mission and patient sufferings, he was bearing witness to the truth as much and as well as when he told men to worship God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth; and as when, on the cross, he offered his life for the regeneration of the world.

ON TRUTH.

No. II.

April 8th, 1838.

Although Truth may, if such gradation be allowed in language, be spoken of as the most abstract of abstractions, the most general of generalisations, yet is it also equally entitled to be classed amongst the most real of realities, the most practical of practicalities. In one view, it is a state or quality of the human mind or human nature; in another, it belongs to whatever we contemplate objectively, and it has its appropriate sphere in whatever belongs to man's doings or sufferings, from the cradle to the grave. The claims of Truth ought to be every where present. It should be in the nursery—it should direct the training by which the infant faculties are first developed—it should be the quality of every portion of the mental aliment that is administered—it should be wrought by the earliest associations into the moral being of the individual, so as to give it its stamp and colour through life, and through whatever ages its consciousness may be prolonged. Its claims ought to preside in the school, to direct both the subject and the mode of instruction, in all the variety in which it can be presented—to guide tuition in the arrangements which it forms, in the facts which it communicates, in the way in which it endeavours to bring the youthful powers to bear upon them, and in the discipline by which they are associated with moral training, and rendered subservient to the expansion of the noblest qualities of our being. Its abode should be in the workshop of the operative, and in the mart where merchants congregate. There should it regulate those agencies of production and of distribution by which the different members of society coöperate, by which one ministers to another according to his ability, and in return re-

ceives, until man realises all the advantages of the fact that he is constituted a social, and not an isolated, creature. It should be found in those seminaries of higher instruction which train men for becoming the leaders of their fellow-creatures. It should be enthroned in the minds of those who administer law and justice, whether they merely decide on the pecuniary differences between man and man, or whether they distribute those penal inflictions which are intended to secure society from rapine and violence, and assist it to cohere together upon principles which afford security for the individual, and promote the well-being of the whole. Legislation should also be under its influence, for laws founded in falsehood can only corrupt society. And, above all, in the professed teaching of religion, which links this world with another and more enduring state, there should be a continuous adherence to the dictates of known truth.

That many influences are established in the world hostile to the general recognition and practical adoption of truth, is a fact that scarcely needs proof or illustration. The frequent recourse, if not to direct falsehood, at least to ambiguity of word or action, which is presented to us as we observe the dealings of human life, is of itself ample and melancholy demonstration of this circumstance. Paley, in his Chapter on Falsehood, remarks that a lie may be conveyed not more by words than by actions, and that men may act a lie; but the illustrations which he has given are very meagre and imperfect. A tradesman acts a lie if, when asked for an article of a particular quality, he hands to his customer one which by no means answers the expectations with which the inquiry was made of him. The same is true of the judge when he places himself on the sacred seat of justice, and directs the infliction of punishments which outrage the most common and most elementary notions of justice—when they tend neither to wholesome warning, to the security of society, nor to the reformation of the offender. Or Paley might have instanced, as an illustration of falsehood by action, that of a prelate of his Church, clothed in his episcopal robes, imposing his hands on the head of a candidate for holy orders, with an intimation by that very action that he is bestowing supernal powers—that he is conveying a Holy Spirit—that he is endowing with some extraordinary functions, which are to render the rites

of religion of more value when administered by that individual than they would be if administered by others who have never gone through such a process.

Temptations to ambiguity of language assail all who have to consult popular opinion, when that opinion is not so clear nor so advanced nor so decided as their own opinion. Hence the frequent and gross disregard of truth in those who appeal to their fellow-citizens for their suffrages to place them in the position of legislators; hence their affectation of waiting for future deliberation on simple elementary points, with regard to which every man who has studied the history of communities, and the principles of political government and social order, must have formed and matured an opinion, or he is altogether unfit to be placed among those who regulate a nation's destinies. Hence general professions of attachment to principles, couched in terms which may apply to almost any set of practical measures,—which may go with one set of enactments, or with another set diametrically opposed to them,—which exhibit a flexibility that nothing can fix, and, consequently, a want of truth that ought to be held most disgraceful.

There are perhaps even stronger temptations than this in dealing with what is deemed heretical opinion in theology. To what poor and paltry contrivances, to what flimsy ambiguities of language, have many professed teachers of religion and morality been driven even by that power which mere popularity exercises over the mind! How often have they endeavoured to cloak, for instance, a denial of the Athanasian notion of the Deity under the profession of great regard and reverence for a scripture Trinity, meaning by that no Trinity at all! How many instances might be adduced from the controversial works of those theologians who have practically gone the furthest in asserting the coördinate authority of reason with faith, but who profess a readiness to submit to the declarations of scripture whenever a proper text can be produced; the reservation in their minds being, that whenever such text is produced, it shall, by the ingenuity of criticism and interpretation, assuredly be made to speak some other language than its own! Instances are not wanting of works which, on many accounts, are held justly valuable, in which, after demonstrations the most vigorous and conclusive that certain doctrines are altogether

irrational and absurd—that they involve contradictions—that they imply absurdities—the writer yet winds up with an expression of reverence for the apostles and prophets so profound that, if they can but be shown in any one instance to have declared these absurdities or asserted these improbabilities, he is ready to believe their assertion—to believe that which he cannot believe, to reverence that which he has shown he despises, to receive as the word of God that which he has proved not to be worthy of being the word of man!

Another power is added to this influence when a creed is established, and connected with high functions and large endowments. Here are standing traps to catch consciences, as Paley called them; and they seldom fail of success. Only look at the history of the Church of England—see what has taken place whenever the construction of its articles and formularies has been relaxed. There was, for instance, considerable laxity allowed in the indulgence of reason at the expense of faith, from the time of the restoration until the commencement of the reign of George III., when the outbreak of the French Revolution frightened those who connected temporal good with the upholding of the throne and the altar into a more rigid orthodoxy than was previously in fashion. In that interval we find almost all the most celebrated names of the Church of England connected with some form or other of what is called heresy—connected with some mode or other of deviation from the plain and obvious interpretation of the formularies of that Church. We find Bishop Taylor, in the goodness of his heart and in the clearness of his intellect, but not, certainly, in the truth of his conformity, denying the doctrine of original sin, shrinking from the assertions plainly before him, in his own articles and creeds, of the total depravity of human nature. We find South departing widely from the Athanasian Trinity, and teaching his own notions concerning the Deity in a way which can only be referred to the old heresy of Sabellius. We find Samuel Clarke reviving the Arianism, or semi-Arianism, of antiquity, and yet having before him the prospect of the highest honours in the Church to which he belonged. We find Bishops Law and Newcome coinciding very often with the modern Unitarian profession of the Christian faith. Sykes cuts

away completely all that is deemed most essential to the doctrine of atonement; while Paley tampered with subscription and conformity altogether, in endeavouring to provide easiness of conscience and self-satisfaction for those of any creed or faith whatever, with the exception of three denominations, who might choose to enter within the boundaries of the establishment. And when all this diversity of thought, all this variety of speculation, became extinct, a strictness of interpretation, an approximation through the Arminian to the Calvinistic view, a thorough acceptance of what was called the evangelical interpretation of the articles, prevailed in society; and, the thoughts of preachers and of prelates flowing in the same direction, an apparent conformity took the place of the diversity that had been tolerated through several generations.

Now, what do we trace here but the action of secular interests upon the language of those who are bound by their position to declare the truth; or else a bias upon the mind itself, causing it to think that which it would not otherwise have thought,—eating away its regard for truth, and enfeebling the power of truth in what should have been its very palace and throne?

Temptations there are surrounding writers and authors of every description, as well as those who, from their public situation in connection with religion or politics, are brought into practical contact with the great masses of the people. It is, unhappily, the tendency of the commercial spirit of this country to impart a commercial character to matters beyond the sphere of its legitimate operation—to extend it to the exhibitions of art—to bring under its control what should be the appropriate region of meditative thought, or of religious contemplation and teaching—and to subdue all the various domains of literature and speculation under its authority. The prevalence of this evil is to be traced in our literature; and, feeling it strongly, it was with great satisfaction that I contemplated, last year, the introduction into the legislature of what was called Mr. Serjeant Talfourd's Bill for the Extension of Copyright. The character of that measure seems to me to be of a more lofty utility than that of any legislative attempt which has been made in recent times. Its spirit and tendency are to lead writers to identify the future with the present,—to look beyond

immediate gain; or, if they cannot throw such considerations out of view altogether—if they cannot write with the simple regard to truth that is glowing within them, and which impels their lips to speak or their pens to record what they think and feel—at least to take views so wide and large as may correct the coarser temptations which bear heavily upon them, and which very often will cause them, if they say all that they think and believe, to appear before the world in the character of confessors and martyrs in combination with that of authors. He calls in the coming generation to the aid of the present—he offers something like security or prospect for those who are willing to write what the next generation may read, or the next after that, though by the present it may be treated with coldness and disregard; and in doing this, he seems to me to be contemplating a noble service to truth and freedom in the expansion of thought. It may, perhaps, be that the purest and highest literature that can be produced would be the one with which money had no concern whatever—with which it was incapable of being brought into combination—in which man would only speak from the fulness of his own heart and mind. The best of all literature is that in which the writer thinks not of recompense—thinks not, perhaps, even of the public; but in which he traces on paper his own spiritual image—makes it bear the reflection of the heart and mind that are in him. The next best is that which is dictated by benevolence for the purposes of instruction. The worst of all must be that which is only produced for the immediate purpose of realising pecuniary profit, and, consequently, to which truth and falsehood, utility and mischief, the pure and the lofty, or the low and the gross, become altogether a matter of indifference. And this, unhappily, is the literature which the present state of things in this country tends so largely to encourage.

Although the best of all literature may be such as I have described, yet this is scarcely the kind to be anticipated to any extent in the present condition of society, in which payment for services cannot be dispensed with. If the gratuitous principle began with books, and were extended to other operations, then, if man needed shelter, the benevolence of the architect and builder would provide it for him

without cost or remuneration; and the producers of different articles of furniture would also make all the arrangements needful for his comfort and enjoyment, without being paid for their labour, or receiving any of his productions in return. But while such a system of beneficent coöperation cannot be acted upon, why should it be anticipated that those who must needs devote the greater and best portion of their lives to the realisation, in a tangible form, of thoughts and feelings, of truths and demonstrations, should be without the claims of property, the prospect of remuneration, which society awards to all other classes?*

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Truth is the soul, it is the vitality, of all literature—it is that without which the writer fails to make his deepest impression—it is that without which the divine may cajole or terrify men to external decency, but without which he will produce no real spiritual conquest—it is that without which even fiction is sure to fall flat and listless on the mind.

Truth in literature may not always be that particular truth which the author contemplates; for very often there seems to be a power over him of which he is not aware, and which produces results that he never designed. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* owes its power to truth; but the truth felt by the reader in this day is different from that which was in the mind of the author. He wrote to illustrate the influence of Calvinistic doctrines on the mind; but the truth that upholds his work, as a living poem, from generation to generation, is the humanity of those allegorical characters—it is the going forth of the spirit with Christian in his apprehensions, and with Mercy on her pilgrimage, and with the champion Greatheart in his valour: while the author contemplated nothing of the kind, and was looking only to the embodiment of his own theological dogmas, the native power of his genius and judgment led him on to the realisation of feelings which belong to our universal nature. And thus it is where fancy realises the wild dreams of childhood in the stories of the

* The omitted passages were devoted to answering objections made to Mr. Serjeant Talfourd's Copyright Bill; which, though valuable at the time, have lost their interest through change of circumstance.

Arabian Nights, or paints the knights of chivalry going forth in search of adventures, and, in their devotedness to truth and good, challenging opposition and danger from all wild and fearful sources. It is thus also in the diversified creations of the dramatist; and in the mechanical ingenuity of the processes by which Robinson Crusoe is said to have surrounded himself with images or shadows of the conveniences of social life in his island of solitude; and in the loftiest strains in which the highest poets have sung; and in the visions of Utopia, prefiguring a state of society yet to come, in which simplicity, truth, and justice shall reign, and the arbitrary arrangements and enactments of the present society pass away. Whatever form fiction may assume, it is truth which gives it its power over the heart and the imagination—it is truth which makes it one of our first delights and noblest enjoyments—it is truth that connects itself with agencies of improvement, with the development of intelligence, and with the advance of whatever constitutes the well-being of humanity.

ON TRUTH.

No. III.

April 15th, 1838.

In the lectures on Truth already delivered, there has necessarily been a tendency to produce associations with it of flowing and of change. It has been viewed as an attribute of our nature—of man, the progressive; but when we would gain such a comprehensive view as must send the word truth in its full force upon our understanding, we should look from whatever is mutable in man's nature to those objects which, remaining the same from age to age, exercise an unchanging influence, and produce associations and feelings of permanence and of grandeur. We look beyond ourselves to ascertain the extent and dominion of truth. From the particular attributes of our own nature we look to the common attributes of our common nature, as they are found in the earliest dawning of history, as they appear in society through all its advances from the grossest barbarism to the highest civilisation. We trace truth in the stars of heaven, with their unchanging light—we find it in the universal, enduring principles which pervade the universe—and we endeavour to penetrate even beyond this, to see something of the soul of the universe, to form some acquaintance with the intelligence which regulates all its manifold operations, and which in itself can know no shadow of change—and thus we ascend towards the conception of Truth as divine and everlasting.

In the lines of the poet, which I had occasion to quote in the first lecture, it was said, and justly said in that view of the subject, that

> "All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams, are true;"

it was said also that

> "All truth is change,"

and that

> "All things flow like a stream."

Like a stream, Truth passes through a variety of changes, from its fountain on the hill-side, until it is absorbed in the mighty ocean—it flows along banks now verdant and covered with flowers or with harvests, and now through stern and rocky boundaries—it goes on by the side of castellated halls and gorgeous palaces, of wide-spread cities resounding with the busy hum of men, or pursues its course along desert or forest solitudes—it still keeps flowing on through whatever diversities of change nature, in all the varieties of her appearance, can produce, until at length it is seemingly lost; and yet, through all these, it is ever one and the same. It is the boundary of empires—it parts nations, tribes, languages, and religions, forming the limit within which they were contained in ancient times, and by which they are still marked out in modern history—it verifies the records of ancient chronicles, and it indicates the site of ancient conflicts—it is fed through the same conduits and by the same processes. Through all its diversities there is an enduring oneness, a unity—the unity of God.

It is impossible to discuss the subject of truth without a notion of the Deity, towards which it necessarily tends. Whether we look at the foundations of religion and morality, whether we regard the axioms of abstract science, whether we endeavour to trace the order which prevails through all the seeming contradictions of historical record, or to recognise the simplicity which underlies all the diversities of present and of individual existence,—we are still led towards one set of ultimate principles, towards the notion of one ultimate power, towards the idea of a first and universal cause, an all-pervading intelligence, in which we rest as that which is in itself the truth, and which, being truth, must be love also, identified with the beings whom it generates, one with them,—they existing as its thoughts, the events of their being as its will, and their ultimate destiny as its purpose. And we find that such a notion of oneness, that such an identification of an intelligent creative principle with universal being, has ever been a favourite conception of those whose minds seem to have aspired most powerfully in the pursuit of truth. From ancient to modern times, and through all the changes of society, and all the varied forms of popular adoration, we still find a succession

of men who have thus looked up to Him in whom we live and move and have our being—who have thus dwelt with complacency on the notion of his identification with all that exists. There are traces of this in the theology which sprang up in ancient Egypt, even anterior to the time of Moses; which thence descending in part through the institutions which he framed, and in that way and by other channels into the Gentile world, comes down to us through a variety of channels, but in all bearing an identity of character. Thus, in the Orphic strains the Deity is celebrated under the name of Jupiter: "Wherefore, together with the universe, were made within Jupiter the height of the ethereal heaven—the breadth of the earth and sea—the great ocean—the profound Tartarus—the rivers, and the fountains, and all other things—all the immortal gods and goddesses: whatsoever hath been or shall be was at once contained in the womb of Jupiter." Other portions of these same strains, representing as they do the theological speculations of the Egyptians, and after them many of the Greek philosophers, and especially the Pythagoreans, are thus preserved: "The high, thundering Jove is both the first and the last—Jove is both the head and the middle of all things; all things were made out of Jupiter; Jove is both a man and an immortal maid—Jove is the profundity of the earth and starry heaven—Jove is the breath of all things—Jove is the force of the unquenchable fire—Jove is the bottom of the sea—Jove is sun, moon, and stars—Jove is both the Original and the King of all things. There is one Power, and one God, and one great Ruler over all." Taking a different direction, we find a similar notion of the Deity in the Roman world, in the Roman heathen world, and preserved there in the lines of the poet Virgil. How little difference from this do we find in the views entertained in modern times by a Christian poet—by one in whom the tenets of the Catholic Church gave their peculiar modification to his early conception of the Deity and his works—I mean Pope—who spoke of God as of him who

> "Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

Or, if we look to another branch of the great intellectual stream of antiquity—if, instead of the Egyptian and Grecian line of transmission, we take that of India, in the oldest works which are there known,—in works which are the most venerated, as having come down from the remotest periods, in the most authentic form,—we find delineations which are completely analogous.

Thus have there existed, in countries and in periods the most widely separated, men who have, in common with the most enlightened, philosophical, and devout spirits of our own days, maintained that each bodily sense is a holy thing, communicating immeasurably to all, the influences of that Eternal Spirit whose presence is traced in all the manifestations of intelligence, and in physical nature—in

> "skies, and seas, and forests, lakes and hills,
> And lightnings, thunders, and prodigious storms,
> And suns, and all the company of worlds."

And when we turn from writers of the antique world, of the description which I have just quoted, and look to the productions of the Jewish theology in the Old Testament or the New, what find we there, but language which will scarcely bear any other than an identical interpretation—doxologies to Him of whom and through whom and to whom are all things—declarations that in him we live and move and have our being—the Divine wisdom portrayed by Solomon as being one with God from the ages of eternity, before the mountains were upreared, or the plains and oceans spread forth; and as being also identified with humanity, having its delight with the sons of men, and rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth: and analogous to the wisdom described by Solomon, is the Word spoken of by the Evangelist John, which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, without which was not any thing made that was made, which is in every man that cometh into the world, the true light that lighteth every one. The evangelist whom I have just quoted presents a combination of whatever was most lucid in Jewish theology with whatever was most beautiful and expressive in oriental speculation. He evidently penetrated deeply into the spirit of both, and has combined them in his writings in a way which has no parallel in the productions of any other of the

authors of the Old or New Testament. We owe to him those two declarations of the Deity, "God is light," "God is love"—declarations each sublime considered in itself, but which in their combination ascend to the highest conception that man can form of the Universal and Everlasting Spirit.

The scriptures, we are told, are the depositories of theological truth, and assuredly they are,—but not, perhaps, exactly in the mode which has been frequently represented. Those err, and widely, who would confine the search after theological truth to the documents of the Old and New Testament scriptures, for these scriptures themselves make no such pretensions—nay, they present to us phenomena decidedly inconsistent with them. Throughout, they recognise the presence of a natural religion—throughout, they refer man, not only to voices from heaven and inspired oracles, but to the heavens and the earth, as enduring oracles, whose voice is heard by day and by night going forth into all regions, and evermore proclaiming the Divine glory. And not only throughout the scriptures is there the recognition of a religion of nature, but we find also flowing as tributary streams into the current of scripture knowledge, first, something of Egyptian speculation, which occupies the earlier portion of the book of Genesis, and which seems to have suggested many exalted views of the Deity that would scarcely have occurred to the Israelitish people in their barbarous condition; and at a later period, we find the Chaldean philosophy uniting itself with that great stream of truth, and enriching it with the hopes of man's spiritual, immortal being,—which up to that time, however, had not been discerned by the votaries of the written law.

This, however, is not the way in which scripture is generally studied—there is much more contention about the truth of scripture than there is of a disposition by earnest contemplation to acquire scripture truth. And, first, a list of canonical books is enforced upon us: we must receive the writings of certain authors, and not those of certain other authors, as the Word of God—we must accept the history of David, Solomon, and their successors before the period of the captivity; we must not accept the records of the Maccabees—we are to take the epistle of

James or of Peter, but not that of Barnabas. After drawing up a variety of rules, and representing a conviction of the authenticity of certain writings as essentially entering into the belief by which a man's soul is to be saved, the text is next invested with a verbal infallibility which is nowhere claimed by its writers, and which cannot be ascribed to it without crushing all the operations of intellect in connection with theology into mere verbal criticism, frittering away its powers, and producing tendencies towards the most jesuitical kind of interpretation. Nor even here are we allowed to rest. Beyond this, expositors advance towards defining certain propositions, which, duly fenced by texts, are announced as the leading, essential, fundamental doctrines of the gospel, to which all other propositions are held subordinate, and which are given to us as the sum and substance of what God has unfolded to man. What in this way does Christianity itself become, but merely one of those sectarian institutions, with its creed and its forms, its controversies, its advocates, and its influences,—generating exclusiveness, leading to all pettiness, and promoting the hostility and bigotry which belong to sectarianism, commonly so called. Christianity itself is treated as the doctrine of a sect by its missionaries, when, in this defined and hard manner, they would lead others to its belief. They act not in the spirit of those who fought for their religion—who threw themselves, as it were, fairly and frankly on the public mind, with facts the evidence for which was to be investigated, and with arguments the soundness of which was to be discussed and decided on.

Churches fall into this spirit, and sectarianise Christianity, when they exact submission to their forms, when they represent it as the treasure of which their institution is to be the peculiar bulwark and fortress. And nations themselves are chargeable with the offence when they erect establishments which say to thought, "Thus far shalt thou travel, but no farther;" and by their interpretations and articles, and by the civil distinctions which they create in connection with their professions, endeavour to enthrone a sectarian spirit among the powers of social government and the elements of social being.

We find nothing like this in the records of the sayings and doings of Christ; he taught none of this species of

cut-and-dried religion—he came not with a list of propositions, saying these must be received, and then certain ceremonies must be submitted to, and a particular and exclusive society be formed, and in this way are my followers to be made a sect, to be cut off, to be alienated from the common mind and the common heart of humanity. The whole current of his instructions, the whole spirit of his life and exertions, were directly opposed to this —he was endeavouring continually to denationalise the Jews in their feelings, to subdue and trample on their bigotry, and to make them feel less as Jews and more as men—he was continually striving to enlarge the views of his followers, to impress them with the fact that he had other sheep that were not of that fold, that his messengers were to go forth and call those who should be the heirs of that blessing from the east and the west, from the north and the south, yea, from the uttermost parts of the earth; and, in speaking of the blessings to flow from his own sufferings, by his own heroic self-devotion, he always proclaimed that it was to be for humanity at large—for men, and not for the exclusive few—for human nature, in all its diversities and through all its generations.

Not by word-mongering or text-treating shall we ever get at scripture truth—at least, such is not the view which I entertain of the best method of finding it. To trace in the scriptures the rich fund which they contain of truth divine and everlasting, I would look at the contents of that volume as I look at humanity—see in the one, as I see in the other, extreme diversities, strangely blended—here, views of the Deity which seem depressed to the most limited and corporeal notions of idolatry or of barbarism; there, bright and large thoughts beaming upon the mind and raising it to the contemplation of a most high God over all the nations of the earth—here, a slavish morality, working out its allotted task under the dread of the lash, or scarcely ever free from the not much less servile motive of an external and arbitrary recompense; and there a spirit rising, an impulse towards good, which shows itself rich in the power of individual nature, and illustrious in the character of a goodness which cannot be enforced by the application of arbitrary stimuli, and which we can only imbibe by contemplating, in love and admiration, those

by whom it has been exhibited. I see in the scriptures, occasionally, a vindictiveness that heaps its curses on a hostile people, wishing even for the dashing their little ones against the stones in the day of their great desolation, and which carries on its imprecations from generation to generation, sparing not the innocent and the helpless that are to arise, but seeking to enfold them all within the grasp of a withering malediction; and in that same volume I find a mercy, a beneficence, a love that overflows all bounds, that prays for the forgiveness of murderers, and that looks forward to the highest blessings that can be bestowed, and implores them for those who might be supposed to have elicited only the sternest feelings of our nature. I see humanity in this very diversity. I find the truth of the human heart in the scriptures—the truth, the enduring truth, of our nature, enshrined alike in the lyrics of the Psalms and in the arguments of the Apostle of the Gentiles —recorded on the broad pages of the chronicles of their heroes and their kings of old, and yet more visible in the individual biography of Christ, as seen through the different minds of the four evangelists. Or I trace in the scriptures the conection of events, the linking together of the seemingly trivial with the obviously important—chains of connection carried on through immense distances of country, and a not less immense distance of time, and yet keeping the most perfect unity. I behold the fortunes and history of the Israelitish nation connected with the adventures of a shepherd-boy, sold by his jealous brethren into slavery to certain travelling merchants, and with them going down into Egypt, and, by a strange succession of events, laying the foundation for the future reception of his people there, and for all that befell the Israelites in their hard oppression, their triumphant deliverance, their peaceful settlement in Canaan, and all the subsequent fortunes of their race until their polity was dissolved. I see writers at the most distant periods producing works which have yet that harmony, that oneness of tendency and spirit, that pervades every page of the Bible, from the commencement of the cosmogony in Genesis to the end of the mystic visions in the Revelation. I see there the perfect outline of an epic poem in the narrative of that singular people, commencing with the call of Abraham, their great progenitor,

and the promise that his seed should be numerous as the stars of heaven, and possess the promised land, from the boundaries of the river to those of the mighty ocean; and, this promise realised, a succession of incidents following, in which we trace the majestic scenery of the Egyptian temples and pyramids, and of the towers of Babylon; in which even the throne of Augustus is brought into connection with the manger of Bethlehem, and all made to combine with the great dissolution of the Jewish polity, from which individuals, instructing the human race, went forth to accomplish their allotted task, and make the training of one people the heritage of the human soul through all countries. These do I recognise as showing always a principle in operation, the same as may be found in the most minute investigation of the human body or of the human mind—it is alike a contribution of truth which in its nature is divine and everlasting.

There, too, I see the progress, the advance, of the people—their growth from the childish elements of the Mosaic institutions to the moral principles of the Christian dispensation—their progress from being led as children by the hand, from being enjoined by direct precept what they were to do, until they were fitted to receive general principles, and to work them out intelligently and practically in all their bearings on the relations of human life. There I see them growing, from the time when they heard the voice of God walking in the garden at the close of day, to the time when they adored him as a being whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, filling the earth and pervading all things; and in this very advance, and the means by which it was effected, again I trace truth divine and everlasting.

Thus studied, the scriptures bring their contributions into harmony with those which we obtain from all other sources—thus studied, there is nothing in them which tends to cut us off from the rest of the world, in the way in which particular creeds and forms cut off one body of Christians from another body of Christians. Sectarian character is demolished, not only in reference to the particular versions of interpreters, but it is demolished in reference to the character of religion itself, which is no longer a sectarian imposition upon the world, but a rich

donation of truth to it—of truth to be its universal heritage; and this has accorded with the feelings which some have entertained whose spirits were the most deeply imbued with the real spirit and power of Christianity.

Begin at whatever point of physical science we may, if we pursue it in all its relations, there is no limit at which the mind can rest until it arrives at the comprehension of all truth The simplest mechanical principles that are deduced from the commonest appearances on the face of this our globe—the resolution of forces by which we know why, when one ball strikes another, it takes a particular direction—enable us to understand the celestial mechanism, to trace the orbits of the planets, to calculate their forces, to comprehend the mode, order, and duration of their revolutions. And then, again, the rotation of the planets implies the measure of the day—it leads us on to the calculation of time, through ages past and future—the records of chronology, the anticipations of astronomy. It is also connected with, and leads us to the consideration of, the density and composition of revolving bodies, and thus descends into the paths of geological science and those extraordinary phenomena which are the hieroglyphical record of ages upon ages long gone by—bringing home to us so much of extraordinary truth that in no other way could possibly be realised. Connected also with the density and construction of each globe is the attracting power which its particles exercise on one another—which, as a whole, it exercises upon other bodies—thus laying the foundation of a system of weights and measures, and so many of the practical arrangements of life. The speed of light, calculated by the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites as observed from different distances, assists us to form estimates of the magnitude and of the immense remoteness of the bodies of the starry heavens; and, again, this light, the element whose speed is so calculated, offers to us contemplations which lead to the theory of colour, to a knowledge of the principles on which the eye is so impressed with harmony and beauty. Again, the movements of the air, through which the light passes, conduct us by another road to the knowledge of the theory of sound: and we are led from the wider demonstrations of that material principle which pervades the universe to its nicer phenomena, to those which constitute the objects of the

analysis of the chemist, which unfold to us the mechanical and material sympathies that exist in things, and prepare us for contemplating the almost magical wonders of electricity: whilst all combine, and ever seem to conduct research onward to organised being, through all its gradations in the plant, in the animal, and in man; but, while the research is pursued through all its diversities by this thread, and the thousand other threads of connection that may be indicated, still keeping the notion of universality in our minds, and blending that notion of universality with uniformity and enduringness.

Some conception of this oneness of physical truth may be gained, even without extended scientific research in the individual, from that noble, that admirable work of Mrs. Somerville on the *Connection of the Physical Sciences*. She concludes her summary by observing: "Innumerable instances might be given in illustration of the immediate connection of the physical sciences, most of which are united still more closely by the common bond of analysis, which is daily extending its empire, and will ultimately embrace almost every object of nature in its formulæ. These formulæ, emblematic of Omniscience, condense into a few symbols the immutable laws of the universe. This mighty instrument of human power itself originates in the primitive constitution of the human mind, and rests upon a few fundamental axioms, which have eternally existed in him who implanted them in the breast of man when he created him after his own image."

In fact, what are these but attempts to describe technically the mode of Divine operation?—what are all these laws, what the uniform and undeviating sequence of cause and effect, but the way in which that principal Power or Spirit acts, by which all are pervaded, with which all are identified, which is God, and the knowledge of whose modes of action is truth divine and everlasting?

And so with history. It may often record partial views; it may often be entangled with falsehoods which can only be detected by the acutest criticism, perhaps only when after ages have accumulated the materials by which that criticism must be effected. It may select the acts of courts and the incidents of war as its favourite topics, neglecting that in which the student of humanity is more deeply interested.

It may give a false moral colouring to many of the characters who are enshrined in its pages, and to the tendency of many of its events. And so with philosophy; it may often have been merely a succession of proudly built theories, resting on principles with the detected fallacy of which the whole sinks and evaporates. It may sometimes have lent its speculations to be the hireling agents of power, to varnish over its purposes by a show of principle, of order, and of beauty. But philosophy combined with history can still show us another portion of truth, marked with the same characters as scripture truth and scientific truth. Analogous maxims prevail there; and the ideas of design, plan, principle, order, harmony, God, are again brought home to our minds, again impressed upon our feelings.

Nature and art tell the same tale. I speak of them not as subjects of logical analysis or of scientific inquiry. I speak of their effect on those who can "bless the sun, nor reason why he shines"—whose eye receives the sense of beauty from looking on the colours of the rainbow, though they have never by analysis accounted for their diversity, or their order, or their production—who perceive the loveliness there is in the various productions of the earth, in their forms, their colour, and their arrangement, without endeavouring to reduce them to the classification of science and distribute them into genera and species—and who with man's productions, as with those that nature presents, feel the gloom, the solemnity, the rich, luxurious, and imposing grandeur of the Gothic cathedral, or the simple majesty of the Grecian temple, without any reference to the architectural principles on which the one or the other has been constructed—who, in listening to a strain of music, inquire not into those mathematical laws of proportion which are the basis on which all harmony or melody must ultimately rest—and who, in the very contemplation of nature, are only exercising and experiencing the blessing of that sense of beauty which God has implanted in our being, and for the gratification of which he has provided in the arrangements of the external universe. In these there is truth, and truth that aspires to the characters, and claims the titles, Divine and Everlasting.

Demonstrators of what they have called the truths of natural religion—eloquent advocates for proofs of a cause

from an effect, of a designing agent from indications of design—have, perhaps with more respect for science than veneration for the subject on which it treated, called the Deity the Great Geometer. In the view I am now taking, as appropriately at least might he be called the Great Artist; for what is nature, but the most consummate art? —and human art is nothing but nature idealised. Whether the results of art are presented to us by the combinations, seemingly spontaneous, of elemental principles, or whether they are wrought out by the agency of human intelligence, as when the builder, with toil and labour, and in the mighty force of inspiration, rears the lofty aisles and spreads the spanning roof,—these and the science by which they are constructed are alike emanations from that Mind in which primevally the idea of all must have resided, and from which they are but varied emanations, leading us back to him, the Truth and Love Eternal, from whom they flow. And thus also are we conducted to the same result, by the contemplation of humanity in its different forms—in that type of man which Judaism exhibited, when it chastised him into the hard dogmatic and exclusive theologian—in that type of him which oriental philosophy exhibited when speculation, wandering over the heavens and the earth, saw every where mystic forms and animated principles, until there seemed to be an invisible world far more overpowering than this we inhabit, in all the variety of its combined effects—or in that other type which Greece presented when, through the lucidity of its atmosphere, all beauty, and perfection of form exalted to the ideal, seemed present in the minds of its artists and poets, and they embodied their conceptions, infusing into them the principles of just proportion and an harmonious arrangement, and left humanity to wonder and admire, without daring to imitate, through long ages after them—or in that type which the northern tribes presented of man, gloomy and austere, self-dependent in his forests; his visions of a darker, of a deeper kind, and his spirit ever disposed to melancholy reflectiveness and retrospection. In all these, we trace in humanity the image of God, and we find each of these superinduced upon the other in man's intellectual history, —the hard crust of the Jewish theology broken through by oriental speculation, that forced its way in connection with

it, and gave it a more free, though visionary, character; and this again corrected in its wildness by the purity and order of Grecian taste, and all the attributes of its philosophy; and this rendered more deep and more lofty, more worthy altogether of humanity, by the meditative character of the northern tribes. And thus at length humanity is brought as near as these several agencies can conduct it towards the plenitude of the first type, in the image of which it was formed, and towards which it is its destiny continually to approximate.

That man is the image of God—that in conceiving of the Deity as universal truth and universal love, man should feel himself one with God—is a principle that may well generate self-respect, and prove the best security for whatever is true and good in human character and in human conduct. In man indeed may be imperfections, which mar the complete proportion of the divine image; much may yet remain to be done. But is there not eternity before us? And the principles on which it is to be done, the agency by which it shall be realised,—these are already in our being and in our history. Man should feel himself the temple of God, his purest, his noblest temple, in which universal truth is the religion, universal love the practice, and universal happiness the worship.

ON TRUTH.

No. IV.

April 22d, 1838.

The subject of the present lecture, the Revelation of Truth, is most intimately connected with, and arises immediately out of, that of the last—Truth divine and everlasting. If the view then taken is founded in justice—if we may indeed regard universal being as identified with Deity, and every discovery even of the laws of physical nature as some additional acquaintance with God—then may we not improperly consider all discovery as revelation, all elevated thought, or perhaps all thought, as inspiration; in the opportune phraseology of the book of Job, "there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." And to the progress of human intellect in every department we may fairly and properly apply the terms which have been commonly regarded as exclusively belonging to technical theology.

That discovery generally, and invention to a very large extent, partake of the character of a revelation of truth, is manifest from their history. What is the faculty of the mind to which we are generally indebted for discovery? Not so much reason as imagination. The dawning of fresh truth upon the world is rarely indeed an inference deduced by the logical faculties; it is much more commonly a suggestion, a seemingly unaccountable thought, of the more plastic and inventive powers of our nature. It is not by ceaseless toiling upon materials already accumulated that we have found the benefactors of the world preparing the way for the further advance of human knowledge. The logical powers do but with great toil accumulate materials already existing, gather them together as they are formed and fashioned, pile them up into a watch-tower, on which

imagination takes its stand, looks far beyond the bounded scene of their operation, darts its glances to the very limits of the horizon, discerns regions heretofore unknown, and then sends forth the powers of industry to map out the world which its own penetration has discovered, to describe its boundaries, and to reap its harvests of practical usefulness. It is owing to this circumstance that the origin of some of the most important practical inventions is lost in obscurity—that we witness so many warm controversies as to where such an art as that of printing had its origin—and that as to the invention of letters, that most important of all discoveries connected with the progress of human knowledge, we have scarcely any thing but remote and uncertain speculations, or legends surrounded with clouds of improbability. The progress of discovery is not that of Egyptian slaves piling up bricks into pyramids—it rather resembles the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters, saying, "Let there be light," and there is light.

Pythagoras was right when he offered sacrifice to the gods for the solution of a geometrical proposition; and there was much more of the characteristic of inspiration than of the toil of inferential discovery when the falling of the apple unfolded to the mind of Newton the system of the universe. It is generally by some analogy that a new truth either in physics or in intellectual or moral philosophy is first detected and ascertained; and in the service rendered by analogy we find nature and art, the powers of the elemental world in which we live, and the previous productions of the human mind, genius, and skill, acting with reciprocal influences. In the first rude state of society, when man just adventures himself upon the waters, perchance in the hollow trunk of some old tree, the tail or the fins of a fish give him the notion of the oar or paddle which he proceeds to form—and so commences his career of conquest upon the world of waters. Here analogy is given by nature to art. Ages elapse, man has learned to traverse rivers and seas as boldly as he does the dry land, he has reared his floating habitation, he has formed his stately aqueducts, he has devised means for the speedy and easy transit across vast kingdoms and continents by canals; and in this stage of discovery, art ministers back to nature; and, contemplating the floodgates and the different plans which

have been provided for allowing or obstructing the passage of the watery fluid, he discovers the circulation of the blood in the human frame. And this harmony, this reciprocal operation derived from nature and art in the progress of discovery, corresponds with that system of theology which traces God in every thing, in mind and in matter; which resolves all into one plan; and which regards the whole succession of events as a training of the mind or of the character of rational beings to prepare them for the happiness of their future destiny. It does not agree with that view of the universe which acknowledges no plan, which sees only the operation of blind powers in nature, working out unforeseen results, without intelligence and without arrangement; and as little as it accords with an anti-Theistic notion of the world, does it agree either with the speculations of those who regard this world, not as a scene of education, and gradual preparation of the mind, heart, and character, but rather as a dungeon, in which Divine and vindictive justice visits with punishment the present race for the offences of its first progenitors. The facts harmonise with neither—they lead rather to such a view as has already been taken in these lectures, and to the reference of our existence to His design, to His operations, to His universal presence, to His universal identification, in whom we live and move and have our being.

It is also to be traced to this fact of invention being the act of the imaginative rather than of the logical powers, that there has been so much discussion about the science of the ancients. Some controversialists in this debate, which once raged to a very considerable extent among the learned of Europe, tell us that every thing is of recent discovery—that all true science belongs to our own times—that the place and the time of the birth of each may be satisfactorily ascertained—and that the ancients were miserably destitute of all that constitutes real, practical scientific knowledge. Ingenious writers on the other side have deduced from the different surviving works of antiquity indications of almost all the sciences that have been supposed to be of modern origin—they have found in them hints and intimations that contain the germ of discoveries esteemed the most splendid in their nature and the most extensive in their influence. What is most likely the fact in this case? In antiquity, the

imaginative powers were in more vigorous exercise than at present; the logical powers—the principles of induction and analysis—were comparatively disregarded. There were inventions, there were intimations, which under different circumstances might have grown up into almost all the arts that have now changed the face of the globe and the structure of society itself; but there was not the power which turned them to this account. But it may not be wise perhaps in those who boast so much of practicality in opposition to theory to ask insultingly the question, Of what use, then, were these discoveries? what were they more than mere abortions? Why, they were there laid up for the operation of that power which alone could turn them to practical account; they were there to show that genius precedes and heralds the discoveries of industry; they were there to show the value of that analysis and induction which of late have become so extensive, and to trace the limits of that value; and to show also that to aid the human race in its progress, the exact reasoning of science must by no means be dissociated from what are deemed the most playful and speculative, the most inventive and discursive, faculties of our nature; for without them, what does it avail? It is genius that must ever lead the way for induction, for analysis, for practical application. The suggestion of imagination must precede the operation of experiment and the train of logical reasoning. The electric spark which appeared before the eye of Franklin called up, by the associations of analogy, the notion of lightning, and suggested to him that he should rear his kite into the clouds and draw down celestial fires. Hence it is that almost all discoveries have been made at a time when this portion of human nature is in its most vigorous exercise. It was not, as I have already noticed,—it was not by the result of a long train of geometrical reasoning, whatever his acquirements might be, and his power of using them, that Newton discovered the principle of gravitation. It was an external incident acting upon his fancy rather than on his understanding, and this at a time of life when his powers were scarcely matured. He was under twenty when this suggestion became to his mind the germ of his immortal work, the *Principia*. And how many others of the grandest discoveries in the regions of mind and of

matter have been made in early life! Hobbes had not left his juvenile service in the household of Lord Bacon when he had completed the greater part of those speculations on human nature which changed the metaphysical philosophy of this country, and laid the foundation for the more generally known and appreciated writings of Locke. Galileo and Kepler, though they lived lives of discovery, yet commenced their career of discovery almost with the commencement of their studies, and signalised themselves each one in his youth. Harvey was, it is said, only eighteen years of age when he discovered the circulation of the blood; while it took his whole lifetime, and more than the course of years commonly assigned to a single generation, to induce the practical medical men of that age to adopt it as the true theory, and to act upon it in their various exertions to struggle against disease. Berkeley's great work on Vision was published when he had only attained his six-and-twentieth year. And Hartley, the author of a Mental *Principia* that in the course of time will take its station by the side of the Physical *Principia* of Newton,—the author of whatever is most solid in the speculation of later days upon the elemental laws of human intelligence,—unfolded whatever is most essential therein, while yet a student, in an inaugural theme at college.

What do we gather from intimations such as these, but that the spirit of discovery is identified with an excited imagination, receiving influxes from without of God's own truth, rather than to the mere toil that, building with a knowledge already attained, thinks in that operation to augment the materials which it only arranges? If this be so, we may regard the whole history of human intelligence,—whether we look to the advance of knowledge among the great masses of different communities, or whether we contemplate the uprising of those individual minds which always mark an intellectual era,—and note the qualities that distinguish, each one in its time and place, the man of his age, who not merely imbibes its spirit, but who imbibes also the spirit of a coming period, and thus leads on the minds of his contemporaries; we may regard all as exhibiting plan, order, corresponding with that which we trace in the material universe, and, like that, indicating the presence of a forming and superintending Power.

I know this is not the point of view from which the world generally regards these questions, and that a speculation of this kind will be dismissed by many intellects as one surrounded with so much obscurity and uncertainty as to be not worth attending to. And such is the account given of it by Hume in his essay on the *Rise of the Arts and Sciences.* He there, while professedly engaging in an inquiry as to the circumstances under which the arts rise and flourish, endeavours to show that all speculation must be attended with great uncertainty, and that there must be a large admixture of what he calls chance,—which, if our view of things be right, can have no admission into the world's records:

"The distinguishing between chance and causes must depend upon every particular man's sagacity in considering every particular incident. But if I were to assign any general rule to help us in applying this distinction, it would be the following: What depends upon a few persons is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes; what arises from a great number may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes. . . . . We may therefore conclude that there is no subject in which we must proceed with more caution than in tracing the history of the arts and sciences; lest we assign causes which never existed, and reduce what is merely contingent to stable and universal principles. Those who cultivate the sciences in any state are always few in number; the passion which governs them limited; their taste and judgment delicate and easily perverted; and their application disturbed with the smallest accident. Chance, therefore, or secret and unknown causes, must have a great influence on the rise and progress of all the refined arts. But there is a reason which induces me not to ascribe the matter altogether to chance. Though the persons who cultivate the sciences with such astonishing success as to attract the admiration of posterity be always few, in all nations and ages, it is impossible but a share of the same spirit and genius must be antecedently diffused throughout the people among whom they arise, in order to produce, form, and cultivate, from their earliest infancy, the taste and judgment of those eminent writers."

In a very different spirit is this from that eloquent dissertation in a work on Divine government, which I had not

very long since occasion to quote to you, and which shows how the most eminent personages the world has known have been raised up in every time, in every region, and in circumstances which called for their individual peculiarities, which marked out their career, and by this fitness for it made them the benefactors of the human race. Unless our inquiries go to the solving of such problems, they are vain altogether. For what is the mental history of the world, if it enters not into the reason why, when a great poet appears, he gives his name to the age, and spreads his works over different ages and countries; and how, if a warrior arises, he stamps a military character on a nation, and raises it to the height of martial fame and influence? These are the very things we have to ascertain; and in the fitness, the harmonious correspondence, of the conditions and circumstances under which the greatest minds that have enlightened humanity have been called forth to their exertions, we behold the fruits of that plan and skill which are not less manifest in the phenomena of the intellectual world than in the physical laws which roll the planets in their orbits and which preserve the stars in their courses. It is in observing these fitnesses—it is in tracing the influence of master minds—that we behold, as it were, the genius of the human race advancing towards its maturity of intelligence, by the aid alike of the general diffusion of knowledge, and by the profoundest workings of individual intellect. The individual and the many are thus harmonised with all their reciprocal influences in the history of science, of philosophy, and of religion. But speculations and views like these were evidently foreign to the genius of such a writer as Hume—a writer whose reputation has been most undeserved. He is famous for his History and for his Essays,—for history distinguished by little industry of research, by no fidelity to fact, by no patriotism of principle, by no philosophy of observation; and for essays which show no earnest pursuit of truth, no reverence for sublimity, no love of beauty, no adhesion to consistency even, but which seem merely written to display a kind of intellectual gladiatorship, a refinement and acuteness of understanding, that is after all but a very subordinate quality, but which he reckoned as philosophical sagacity—thus idealising it,—and it was the only thing he ever idealised at all.

The connection of the state of the mind with discovery in science has not been unremarked by those who have applied what may be called the mechanism of the understanding to the doctrines of theology; and it has been from their acuteness of observation, and the dexterity of their admonition, that divines, whose own views seem to have pierced much deeper than those of the proselytes whom they made, have gained so firm a hold for the notion of answers to prayer in the discovery or recognition of truth. I advert not now to the gross error—the superstition—that imagines that the powers of the material world are to be turned aside in accommodation to the petitions of devout worshipers—that believes that even the course of the winds or the violence of the waves will be regulated by the Deity—or that his purpose can, as it were, be changed, in accommodation to the earnestness of their petitions. I speak of a view which is much more moderate and reasonable than this, and in which I apprehend there have been considerable confusion and mistake. The Unitarian prays that God would unfold to him divine truth, or keep him therein. The Trinitarian offers the same prayer, and with an answer of directly opposite result; and every sectarian joins in the petition, and believes that he has an answer, through all the diversity of all the creeds that constitute the distinctive banners of sectarianism. We impeach not the sincerity of these different parties. No doubt the Unitarian and the Trinitarian, with their similar prayers and their opposite answers, may be equally honest; and no doubt the same individual has a like integrity when, at different periods of his life, he offers this prayer, and at those different periods receives different answers to it, now being in conformity with one view, and now leading to the adoption of another. What I would point out is, the difference of the state of the mind which is thus exemplified, from that which I have endeavoured to exhibit as connected with the discovery of physical or moral truth. The imaginative and poetical faculties of the soul are not in exercise when these petitions are offered; they are rather the theological ones. Those who offer up such prayers have their minds bent on the investigation of texts or dogmas; it is on the interpretation of these—and how they can be elaborated by human ingenuity—that they are thinking; and whether the result be the confirmation of

their views, or whether it leads to what they call "conversion," still the mistake is the same,—they are pursuing a course which, however much it may have been associated with proof or disproof, with the establishment of the truth once known or the exposure of error once detected, has not generally been in harmony with the discovery of truth. That is the result of a more contemplative condition. The man who would see divine truth, may or may not engage in the formal act of prayer—that, I apprehend, has comparatively little to do with it; but if his mind be—while contemplating the things around—the world, and the heavens, and the pages of sacred or of profane history—in a calm and pure, beneficent and imaginative state, why, then, it is likely that views true and beautiful and bright will beam upon his soul, and that he may gain such conceptions of truth as will for many a long year be a blessing to his own character and conduct, whilst through him they may instil gratitude and hope into the souls of others. And it is from the association of this elevated state of the mind with discovery, that we may understand how so many large and exalted views of morals have been held at very early periods—how it was that in barbarous ages men arose who yet seemed to penetrate to the lowest depths of our moral being, or to ascend at once to the noblest heights of morality and religion—why such men as Confucius anticipated the doctrines of the Christian morality, taught the doing to others as we would that others should do unto us, and laid down some of the soundest theoretical and practical maxims, that have been vindicated by the calculations of after ages, and demonstrated by the reasoning of those who belong to a state of much more extended intelligence. It is owing to this that we find in the old writings of the Hindoo Brahmins so many grand views of God and universal nature, and that we find recommended by the Persian poets the repaying of injury and insult by beneficence and love, so achieving the glorious conquest of good over evil; it is owing to this that we find even ascribed to an Athenian sophist, in one of the dialogues of Plato, the declaration that punishment must be strangely misunderstood by those who visit man with it on account of what he has done,—that punishment ought not to be in reference to the past, but to the future,—that it is the nature of the brute animal to apportion so much vindictiveness to

so much offence,—and that the only reason for inflicting punishment is, that the criminal may be reformed, or that accidents of a similar nature may be prevented, and the peace and good of society wrought out in the times about to follow. So speculated the Athenian sophist; practical men of legislation and society have not yet applied his theory to the concerns of life.

The great doctrine, in morals, of Utility—the greatest-happiness principle—has been three times, in distant ages and countries, discovered or revealed to mortals. It was taught by Socrates in that peculiar mode which he adopted —taught by him synthetically, as leading the minds of his hearers to it, by his questioning on rational and metaphysical principles. It has been taught, in our own days, by the venerable Bentham—taught in its application to the peculiarities of society as now existing, and in a spirit which shows its affinity with the existing habit of regarding every thing as matter of calculation, weighing consequences against consequences, and striking a balance, which is to be taken as deciding the individual's course of action. And it is also the doctrine of the New Testament—the doctrine of Christ's inspiration—the doctrine which runs through all his moral teaching—the morality in which love is the fulfilment of the law, and in which doing to others as we would they should do unto us is the measure of virtuous conduct.

This is the Christian form of the greatest-happiness principle; and its distinction from the other two is, that it partakes neither of the merely intellectual character of the one nor of the calculating spirit of the other, but that it is an appeal to sympathy; that it unites doctrine with emotions which belong to the constitution of humanity; that it erects for every man, in his own heart, a tribunal to which he may appeal, and by which, in most cases, he may safely be guided,—whose decisions are correct and extended in proportion to the extension of his intelligence, and which can never be superseded by any degree of mental light at which he may be able to arrive.

Suggestion we may suppose to have originated the idea in Socrates, for we do not find him giving any account of it as a discovery arrived at by logical deduction. Suggestion must it have been originally to the mind of Bentham, for

it was not the final result, but the anticipatory commencement of the labours of his long life: the first page of his first work, which was published while he was a youth, and only looking forward to his laborious career, contains as plain, bold, and unhesitating a statement as do any of his later works, or the most elaborate compositions that he afterwards put forth. And in the teaching of Christ there can be no doubt that it was the result of impulse or inspiration. It was not by logical induction that he ever wrought—he poured forth truth as coming from the human heart and able to commend itself to the human heart, and in this power he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes; and so he gave to the world the Christian doctrine of the greatest-happiness principle, basing it on sympathy for its proof, its exposition, and its application. And it was well so placed, for the feelings are expositors of truth. The imaginative and appreciating, the impulsive and enjoying, faculties of our nature, have their work not less distinctly marked out, and their useful agency not less conspicuous, than have the powers of the understanding—they have generally been found the truest expositors of the worthiest truths. Affection and feeling acted their part in his disciples in their reverential following of their Master, their treasuring up of his words, often going far beyond their own conception or interpretation; and thus they grew up into a fitness for the work to which he destined them when he sent them to be the teachers of distant nations in a purer morality than the world had yet entertained. The feelings and affections are expositors of truth in a different sense from this where they animate men into the assertion of the rights that belong to their common nature—when the beaten slave looks his tyrant in the face, and asserts his equality. The feelings and passions are expositors of truth when the voice of a mighty multitude replies in the echo of its power and determination to some vigorous assertion of the principles of truth or of universal justice. Whenever the mind is excited, whenever the work of the poet or the philosopher causes that vibration in the frame which assures us we are in sympathy with great ones whom we admire, truth flows from the imagination of one into the imagination of the other, and light is elicited by the communication of its beams.

It was to act as a suggestion, rather than as a direct communication, of truth, that the extraordinary events and extraordinary announcements—in other words, the miracles and prophecies—of scripture have their place in that history, or in the course of the occurrences which are there recorded. We oftentimes hear them appealed to as argumentative proof; by unwise advocates, sceptics are told that on miracle and prophecy, as upon two firm pillars, the doctrines of religion rest, and that by these they are demonstrated. Now, so far from this being the case, I take it, the great difficulty is to prove the miracles and prophecies. So far from these being the proof, it is for them that the proof is required; and the rationality of the theology or morality with which they are associated may much more easily make its way to men's minds and hearts than can this, as it seems to me, temporary appendage. The Jews, for instance, whose education is exhibited to us in sacred history, were not a people who arrived, or who could arrive, at a lofty conception of God, or just views of morality, by the exercise of their reasoning faculties—it was not in this way, or through this agency, that the revelation of divine truth could reach their souls—it was by suggestion;—and what nature could not suggest to them, because they did not understand nature; what the voice of the heavens and of the earth, declaring the glory of God, could not convey to their minds, because they had not yet become acquainted with the laws by which the heavens and the earth are governed,—what could not be done in this way, was done by extraordinary events; and in the way in which the announcement was made of the coming events which they witnessed, and in the wonders which took place in their deliverance from Egypt and their passage through the wilderness, they recognised the power of God, which in no other way could have been so impressed on their minds. The lesson was taught and learnt—the results are gained for coming ages, for us and for all who are to follow us; and why should there remain so much of controversy, so much of quarrel, about the school-book, or the school-agency, by which it was originally communicated?

The best statement of this branch of the subject that I am acquainted with, in our own language, is that contained

in the Rev. James Martineau's Lectures on the *Rationale of Religious Inquiry;* and he has put very distinctly the proper agency of miracles, and the connection of natural with revealed religion, in the conclusion of the fifth of those lectures:

"Revelation, then, is not a contradiction to the great principles of natural religion; this would destroy its evidence. Neither is it a mere record of them; this would render it useless. The true light in which to regard it is, that it is an *assumption* of some, and an *anticipation* or *confirmation* of others. I say, it is an *assumption* of some. It does not prove, it takes for granted, the grand fundamental principles of Theism, *that there is a God, and that he is* ONE. Little reflection is needed to convince any one that of these the scriptures do not, and could not, offer any evidence. In order to perceive this, conceive a mind to be destitute of these ideas, and immersed in Atheism; and suppose a revelation to be presented to it. The communication must be guaranteed by miracle; but what is miracle to one who has no previous conception of a God? It is but a strange and curious fact, no more suggesting to his thought any religious ideas, than if water were to freeze on his fire, or a tree of his garden to blossom in the frost. It would imply, indeed, some power in nature with which he was not familiar; but that that power was an intelligent will, and not rather a mechanical force, could not possibly be inferred by him. It would teach him that there was something hidden, but would only drive him to his experiments again to discover in what region of science it lurked. A miracle, indeed, simply as miracle, is a memento, not a proof, of God; for the existence of mind is to be evidenced, not by displays of power, but by symptoms of design. And that the Unity of the Deity cannot be established by miracle is no less certain. For supernatural facts might exist where there is a multitude of supernatural powers with at least as great probability as where there is but one. Of these two truths, then, revelation presupposes us to be possessed. It relies upon their recognition by our minds; it appeals to their power over our thoughts. And thus the very existence of revelation is a solemn sanction to the sublime and simple elements of natural religion; it proclaims us competent to their discovery; it invites us to ascertain

and trust their truth. And while I admit, and indeed earnestly maintain, that to Christianity we are indebted for the knowledge at an early period, and the diffusion, by the power of its authority, through myriads of minds, otherwise unreclaimed, of all the other great principles of religion;—though the blessed faith in a universal Providence would not, I believe, have descended from the inaccessible heights of a few philosophical minds, had not Christ told us of Him that paints the lilies of the field, and watches the sparrow as it falls;—though the inspiring anticipation of immortality would not have penetrated the heart of society, and illumined the recesses of misery, and nerved the arm of virtue, had not Christ achieved the triumph of the tomb;—still, acknowledging the Gospel to be the *record*, the register of sacred truths, I cannot forget that creation is the scene of their exhibition, the residence of the reality. God's name is in the Bible; his presence is in the world. Inspiration *speaks* of his power; creation exemplifies it. Sacred men declare his wisdom; a more sacred universe displays it."

In the parable of the sower, Christ has beautifully described the different modes in which his doctrine is received by different classes of professors. For although the parable was specially directed to those who heard the preacher, it contains, by implication, no obscure delineation of the qualities that characterised Christ himself, and that must ever belong to those to whom the world shall be most indebted for their illustration of truth and their acceleration of its progress. In the description of himself, under his favourite appellation of Son of Man, we note that identification with human nature, that feeling of oneness, that brotherhood with the possessors of our common constitution through its countless diversities, which has ever marked the great philosopher, poet, statesman, or philanthropist, which has been the impulse to their exertions and the guidance of their efforts. In his account of the sower carrying forth the good and precious seed, we trace the fact that he was his own first disciple—we read the necessity of that truthfulness to one's own convictions, of the need that our minds should be thoroughly imbued with the object and importance of its peculiar mission, without which nothing good has ever

been or ever can be achieved. In his description of the different soils on which the seed fell, as they appeared to the sower of the seed, we learn that men who would benefit their fellow-creatures and render service to truth, must be observant of the differences among human minds, as well as of what is common to the human constitution—must know well the state and tendency of others, their prejudices, their feelings, their ignorance, their requirements, and their wants, in order to render to them the best and most useful services. And in the result of the sower's going forth to sow, we have, finally, the impressive lesson, that those who would undertake such mission, under whatever circumstances, must generally be prepared for much disappointment, and must be able to endure much of waiting and of weariness, if not of active conflict, in the hope of that result towards which their aspirations point—the growing of the good seed on good ground for future harvests, only, perhaps, to be gladsome and joyous and sunny when the sowers are beneath the soil. And many and large classes of men there have been, answering, in a greater or less degree, to this description, animated by this spirit, and leaving the world their lasting debtors. Such were, in the old world, the patriarchs, who first came forth from scenes of turmoil and contention: it was not from feelings of pride, selfishness, or the exclusiveness of bigotry, that such men as Abraham left the scenes of their nativity, their social connections, and went forth, not knowing whither they went; it was that they might be the founders of a new and purer state of society than that which had begun to show itself in the congregated multitudes of crowded cities—it was this which they sought, and which they realised, in their wanderings over the ample surface of the yet unoccupied globe—it was this which held around them their numerous retainers and dependents. The patriarch, the solitary patriarch, was safe amid his hundreds of slaves, not by external constraint;—by no compulsion of society around them was the numerous household held together,—but by willing obedience to the power, knowledge, goodness of its chief,—by the bonds of reverence and of love,—for by no other could they have been restrained in the pathless wilderness through which they passed, where

every thing seemed to invite the competition of brute force, and of the many with the few. And thus it was that these patriarchs identified their names with the noblest conceptions of future times—that they became starting-points in the world's progress, majestic in their forms, even as seen by us in that twilight of tradition in which they lived, or in their early annals of authentic history. We see them making their way over the yet untrodden wildernesses of the world as the heralds of a long train of descendants, growing into nations, and often showing their veneration for those to whom they succeeded by raising them into the rank of deities; thus keeping the germ of truth even amid the errors of idolatry, when they paid the honours of divinities to those who had been the fathers of nations. Their example yet lives in the world. The effect of their migrations is still felt by us. The seed which was sown by them when the earth was an uncultivated wilderness, springs up even where it is covered with the buildings that later times have raised, and mingles its pastoral beauty with all the complications of imperial society.

Primitive legislators were the bearers of precious seed to grow in remote periods. What men were they who first laid firm and deep the foundations of civilised society, whose names have been aggrandised in so many of the religions of antiquity! How different from such as call themselves legislators in modern times! The ancients thought of laws and institutions that should not yield to, but that should fashion, character—they meant to form thought and habit and action according to that which they deemed best; and they founded an actual, practical, and enduring society.

A legislator—one who aspires to be such now—dares not put wisdom into a law; he is afraid of the ignorance which he represents; he is afraid of the veto on his labours, of the prejudice which is above him. We have scarcely any adventuring upon legislation in a bold and comprehensive, in a moral and philosophical, way in recent times, unless it be indeed in the *Code Napoleon*, and that was the result of a social convulsion—it arose after an earthquake which had prepared men for prodigies—it was the offspring of a mind, mighty but irregular, and that failed to give per-

manence to the work which it had the power of achieving. But Numa, Lycurgus,—they gave the form of law to conceptions derived by them from human nature, for the purpose of reacting again on human nature, and of being the permanent landmarks of right and of justice, of thought and of action. And Moses—his laws but little understood by those who transformed legislation into theology, and ceremony into religious duty—Moses yet rears his sceptre even over the dispersed of Israel. The fruits of the institutions which he gave them in the wilderness are yet visible in their peculiarities and in their lives. Even the convulsion that destroyed their polity,—even the collision with Rome, which ended in the destruction of their temple and their city, and their being scattered over all the nations of the earth,—even this has not destroyed a legislation founded on a deep knowledge of human nature as existing in a particular race, which is still exercising its influence after the lapse of thousands of years.

And where all memorial of institutions, except what the antiquary may elicit, has passed away, their results have not yet been abolished. In how much of what we now do—in how much of our habitual speculation and action—are there, probably, lurking the consequences of laws that were made by men who knew not the nations nor the languages over which they should thus exercise a remote influence, and which did not rise on the world till generations after they had been laid in their graves! These, then, were the sowers of a seed that shall never cease to grow.

In the first studies of our early years, we imbibe the knowledge of men who have lived in different ages, and who by much toil accumulated and classified that which we receive with our simplest lessons. In our contemplation of a building, of a painting, of a statue, in our feelings, are the fruits of seed sown by those who conceived such works of art, and who, under the power of the inspiration of genius, gave them to the world for an enduring heritage. When we imbibe strong emotions from the poet's pages, it is an echo in our own souls of the melody of the strain with which his soul was elevated and enchanted, and which peals on in the world, eternal as the music of the spheres. In the remotest recesses of a crowded city, there is many a

humble dwelling which is rife with lofty speculation derived from the time when the sages of Academus lectured to their disciples in their gardens, and first taught the world divine philosophy. In all the voluntary occupations and exercises of the mind, in all the sources from which it seeks a stimulus, and in the richest enjoyments by which it is surrounded, we are reaping the fruit of seed sown long, long ago—which may have remained dormant in some cases, perhaps, through ages, but yet which revives and shows its power—as in the turning up of the soil from the lowest depths to which human art can reach, we find that when exposed to the atmosphere, and spread open to the sunshine and the shower, there springs up over the surface vegetation the germs of which had long lain quiescent in their undisturbed abode. And heroes and martyrs are among the sowers of the good seed of which humanity reaps the harvest. Wherever a noble deed has left its record traced on the pages of history, or preserved by the recognition of tradition, there is seed which shall not be thrown away, but that shall produce fruit after its kind of like purity and loftiness of character.

How many there are who have been strengthened to throw themselves into the world's flood, even when the storm was raging, and to buffet lustily against its billows, from the example of him who went forth, not knowing whither he went, in his devotedness to the true and to the right! How often has the impulse of vindictiveness or of retribution been staid, how often has mercy taken possession of the heart, because there came upon the ear the faint sound of his expiring language who, on the cross, prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers! And how many a confessor and martyr has gone with a firm step to the scaffold or the stake in the strength of the verse which he repeats, "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand"! How many and many a battle for freedom has been won triumphantly by the reflected bravery of the three hundred who perished in the pass of Thermopylæ! And how often has the languid cause of humanity and of justice and of social right been rallied, and rallied with force, to a bold and strong and enduring revival, by the remembrance of Cato's devotion to the hopeless and helpless cause of the falling liberties of Rome!

The names of Russell, Hampden, and Sidney have been a watchword in our land, and must ever be so, unless the profanations of party desecrate them by abusing them to its limited purposes and sordid interests. And if it was justly said that Howard trod an unfrequented path to fame, how many a spirit grows strong in philanthropy through looking to him! and it is as if in the Catholic legend of the chapel built on Mount Olivet, the roof could not be closed; the Divine glory having once been revealed, it cannot be obscured from men's eyes.

Even those who live in the humblest position—even those who have no opportunity for striking or splendid acts, that shall command man's sympathy and admiration from country to country, or age to age—even for them a similar path is open—even they may become practical fellow-workers with God and with Christ in the work which we are now describing; and whenever they, in their limited sphere, devote themselves to moral truth, though it be with no power of literary or artistic or legislative talent, still they add to the number of instances in which, by action and endurance, truth is revealed to humanity. They are the sowers—they are going forth in their bounded path with precious seed; and although some may fall on stony ground and perish there, and others be devoured in their very sight by the fowls of heaven or the unclean birds of the air, yet still some will fall on good ground, and bring forth good fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold.

ON TRUTH.

No. V.

April 29th, 1838.

In the second lecture of this course, the digression into which I was led, from the interest of a temporary subject, yet one of enduring concern in its anticipated influences, led me to pass over, either without any mention or with a very slight one, some of the topics associated in the syllabus with that lecture. I shall include these, introducing them as the connection may best serve, in the lecture which I am about to deliver, and which I shall consequently be obliged to divide into two, finishing the course next Sunday morning.

When Peter asked Christ what advantage those would have who had abandoned all earthly good to follow him—who had forsaken friends, and children, and houses, and lands—Christ replied, that they should receive all a hundredfold with persecution; and in this reply, interpreted according to its obvious meaning, as warranted by the history of the apostles, I think we have the true philosophy of persecution and compensation,—we have an indication of that point at which self-sacrifice becomes self-interest, and the individual at once devotes himself for the good of society, and yet receives back, measured abundantly, overflowingly into his own bosom, the good which he communicates. The answer of Christ cannot, of course, be taken in its strictly literal acceptation; but he meant that the species of enjoyment afforded by those external advantages—the highest and purest and most enduring results which they are capable of producing—that these should be multiplied in the consciousness of those who give themselves up for the well-being of their fellow-creatures.

The last lecture concluded with an enumeration of those

whom I regarded as the sowers of the good seed; of those who, in different ages and in different capacities, had benefited mankind, and who might be considered as divine agents in producing the amount of intelligence, and goodness, and enjoyment, and hope,—the moral harvest,—which the world is now reaping, and will continue to reap more abundantly. But of all those classes, and of the individuals of whom they were composed, who is there whose history does not exhibit indications of sacrifice and suffering, accompanying, and as it were essentially intertwined with, the noble exertions by which mankind is benefited?

When we look back into the dim distance of the heroic ages, the legends which tell us of the exploits of Prometheus obtaining celestial fire for man, or of Hercules ridding the world of monsters, tell us also of the endurance of those demigods; and whatever might be the foundation for these legendary stories in the historical truth of good conferred, no doubt there was an equal foundation in that truth for the sacrifices they made and for the sufferings they endured. Or if we look at the patriarchal history, the fathers of nations whose distant but majestic forms were then glanced at, we find they were aliens for conscience' sake from their paternal homes, they had to endure persecution, they had to confront the nascent spirit of bigotry and persecution; and the tales which recount the violence to which Abraham was exposed, and which represent him as being summoned before the then rising imperial authority of the state to answer for his not worshiping the wind, the stars, or the fire, no doubt had their foundation in reality, and constituted one of the elements of that fame which the patriarch enjoyed not only amongst his posterity in Judæa, but throughout the regions of the East. Moses and those who founded states and nations had to struggle hard with the savage spirit which they attempted to control. We find the Jewish legislator showing frequent indications of a sinking heart at the ignorance and obstinacy and savageness which he had to direct, and which offered the only materials within his reach for the foundation of an enduring national morality. The author of the Spartan institutions expatriated himself permanently, binding his countrymen with an oath to observe his reformed institutions until his return. The author of the Roman State became deified

by assassination—the daggers of the patricians made Romulus a god. Those who surpassed others in philosophy or religion had to encounter like results. Anaxagoras and Socrates were arraigned before the tribunals of their country for impiety and atheism.

Even supplying the lighter advantages and benefits of amusement could not preserve men from the common doom which seems to hang over all the benefactors of the human race; and much as must have been ministered to their contemporaries, and has been ministered to subsequent ages, by the wit of Plautus or of Terence, they were still doomed to pass their lives in slavery, and the former at least in the harshest of drudgery to which domestic slaves in old Rome were condemned. Divine inspiration even could not be pleaded as an exemption. The prophets of the Jewish dispensation frequently lost their lives by the violent hands of those who built and garnished the tombs of their predecessors, and whose posterity were ever ready to inflict the same fate on those who followed those prophets in their mission, while paying to their memory the reparation of similar honours. And thus it went on through the whole antique world, till John the Baptist came as the herald of a new religion; and he had to perform his herald's work eventually by the loss of his liberty and of his life. So was the way prepared for Christ, who found the elevation of the cross in his path upwards to his permanent abode on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The experience of modern times affords numerous instances of a similar nature in the records of a similar destiny to insurgent reformers, who have to endure a traitor's doom, unless they are immediately successful,—and prompt and extensive success can rarely indeed be the result of a mental and moral reformation. Such sudden vicissitude may attend the unexpected putting forth of physical force, but it belongs not to insurrections and rebellions of the mind. With ignorance and prejudice has the wise statesman of modern times, not less than those of antiquity, to struggle, ever finding the noblest and most beneficent views which he can indulge, thwarted by that very society that would be blest by their realisation; and if active persecution does not await the

abstract speculations of the philosopher in the quietude of his own study, in his cell of solitary occupation—if it does not await the exertions of men of literature or of art in their endeavour to give form and external body to the bright imaginings of their own intelligence—still there is a want of sympathy, of interest, and of harmony between their views and pursuits and those which usually predominate in society, that brings us to the same result, and that makes the story of the calamities of the world's benefactors one of the most voluminous and one of the most deeply affecting works that the pen can write or that society can study. Their strength, their consolation, must ever have been internal, and not external. In the hope and realisation of futurity must ever have been their counterbalance for the evils of the present time; and like Galileo, from the darkness of their dungeon, when emerging from it perhaps only in fancy, their resource has been but to look upon the bright sun, and to mark its changing shadow on the revolving earth, and, in spite of dungeons, chains, and inquisitions, to say, "Yet it moves."

But what would have been the state of the world, had not Providence raised up in succession spirits of this order, to be the agents of its plans and the authors of human good? Had Christ persisted in his prayer that the cup of bitterness might pass from him, how long would it have been before the cup of bondage had passed from the lips of the domestic slave—before the cup of intemperance would have passed away from the sceptical revellers of the Roman world—before the cup of idolatry, which poured forth its libations to a debasing mythology, had passed away, in order to make room for purer offerings and sacrifices? Had Socrates succumbed before the tribunal which arraigned and condemned him, the dominion of tyranny and ignorance and prejudice would have been established in that city which was then the centre, the heart, of the civilised world; and the noblest school of philosophy ever founded would have been crushed, would have withered in its very first blossoms. It is to the endurance which has been manifested, it is to the firmness which has been exhibited, and which is one of the qualities of the peculiar character of the mind that is destined for such a work, that we owe the triumphs it has been able to achieve; and one after

another has looked up and beheld as the reality of an inspired imagination, though not in an external form, that symbol which was said to have wrought the conversion of Constantine—they have looked to heaven, which might be overclouded, and they have seen there the Cross, the emblem of suffering, enwreathed with laurel, and have read its animating inscription: "In this sign thou shalt conquer."

What, then, is incumbent upon the individual who contemplates these results and who surveys his own position, that he may ascertain his own duty? Is it for him to say, I am not called to be a sufferer, a confessor, or a martyr; my business is merely to work out the greatest amount of good that I can; and if error or ignorance, conventionalism or prejudice, will not let me do it in one way, then I must in self-defence effect it in another way? Is it for the individual to say, On me no such burden is imposed; I am not bound by laws divine or human to the full confession and utterance of my thoughts and the expression of my opinions, where they clash with my interests, and where they impede that realisation of external independence or affluence which on other accounts I also hold it my duty to realise? The reply to the question of morality is decided by the result. That brief sketch which we have gone over shows that truthfulness and sincerity were essential to the world's progress; the cause and effect are distinctly before us; and history decides the question on the largest and broadest scale, and with the most unhesitating result. Stript of all ambiguity and mystification, the question which we are supposing the individual to put to himself is simply this: Shall I be a moral person or an immoral one? shall I be an honest person or a dishonest one? shall I be a virtuous or a vicious person? To this it comes; and his doubt is, whether it is not, in his particular position, a much more convenient thing to be vicious than virtuous, to be dishonest than honest, and to be immoral rather than moral; and I think the mere reduction of the inquiry to these its simple and elementary terms is no slight advance towards the decision that must be given; and in proportion as the question is truly answered by one individual after another, the facility of the decision is immensely advanced.

If men were but content to appear that which they are, to say that which they think, to act according to their convictions, there would be an end of many an institution that is upheld in spite of a general but a latent conviction of its not being the best adapted to the purposes of the public good—there would be an end of many a social conventionalism, the hollowness of which is felt by all parties, who yet agree to hold it in a kind of external reverence, because they see that others are disposed to speak of it in such terms—there would be an end of many a dogma and imposition of form and ceremony in religion, the obligation of which scarcely any one feels on his conscience, but which men pretend to accept, because showing a disregard for it, or treating it in the mere light of rationality, would expose them to the censure of others, who may in secret be thinking precisely like themselves. Let but once this crust over the surface of opinion be broken through, and how much would be done for the world's regeneration, how much would be done toward the reconciliation of the most obvious and glaring conflicts of duty and inclination with the dictates of morality, with those even of immediate interest! As the world is constituted, while this system of things endures, the knowledge of duty is truth—truth in our own nature, faculties, and tendencies; truth in the physical world, and its various elements and combinations, by which we are surrounded; truth beaming upon us from the reflection of mighty minds or the deeds of heroic spirits in the past; truth in the ascertainable tendencies of the present condition of society, and the direction in which they are flowing; truth on every hand,—above us, around us, and within us; the truth which is in man and God, and with which alone can coexist the highest degrees of human goodness and human happiness. In this view, duty and interest are brought at once to an entire coincidence.

I am urging these considerations as they present themselves to my own mind. I hold that truth belongs to the means as well as to the end—to the agency as well as to the result; and that to depart from it for the purpose of persuasion is as serious a mistake as to depart from it in the object towards which that persuasion is directed. It is not enough that we consecrate it in the purpose at which we

aim; we should also consecrate it in the endeavours by which we hope that purpose will be realised. There is on this point an exceedingly lax morality prevalent amongst men who yet profess to be actuated by the purest motives and to contemplate the purest objects of truth. Man never with impunity trifles with truth; and however innocent it may seem to take the other side of a question for the sake of discussion—to sport with argument in order to gain a logical victory, without being satisfied of the solidity, not only of that which it is attempted to prove, but of the means by which that attempt at proof is sustained and carried out—it is one of the most pernicious habits to which the mind can be subject; nor have there been wanting instances of acute, of refined, of capacious, and in some particulars of powerful intellects, that have been utterly ruined by the indulgence of this propensity. The other side of a question has been taken for the sake, perhaps, of displaying ingenuity,—originally it might be to elicit the entire view of a subject, and array all that could be said on both sides. But by familiarity with such a practice, the feelings become deadened to the perception of truth; and, unconscious of deviation from it, the power of weighing antagonistic arguments in an even balance is gradually lost. Directing attention to the operation of an argument on the minds of others, instead of estimating its force upon the individual's own intellect, leads the intellect into such a state as that it ceases to put forth the power it once possessed of distinguishing truth from error; the mind at last sinks into a state of universal scepticism, and well it is if that be not followed by one of dark and hopeless suffering, of deep despondency, —from which, perhaps, relief is sought in the gross stimulus of animal enjoyment.

The powers of persuasion are a gift, a precious gift, from God to man, that should ever be used under a solemn sense of his responsibility. Ill was it for the world when rhetoric became an art, and when the use of the topics that act on the minds and feelings of others was comprehended and inculcated as a portion simply of the machinery by which men might promote their interests or serve their ambition. What can be more affecting than to see a man gifted with these powers, capable of raising or allaying the storm of passion in thousands of hearers, formed to excite and direct

the mighty impulse of popular enthusiasm, who uses the means which he thus possesses without an adequate regard for truth—who professes his devotion for life, for eternity, to certain great principles; and yet shows that, for a temporary and party object, any principle whatever may be dispensed with and put by—who holds up certain men to view as objects of unlimited confidence, or brands them with the strongest terms of reprobation—who professes to reverence the great principles of religion and of patriotism, yet ceaselessly deviates into a mere appeal to the prejudices of nationality or of superstition—who, when he does accomplish an object, when he wins some great triumph of civil or religious liberty, mars the beauty, glory, and power of that triumph by connecting it with principles and feelings that are antagonistic to religious liberty, that cut down what is gained, that make it the mere shell and husk of the good and glory that it appears to be, and leave the old powers of darkness, of error, of antagonism, and of bigotry still sitting upon their thrones,—thus rendering, as it were, a life abortive that might have done so much towards the attainment of the true and the good; and at length, at the conclusion of all, ending with this world as did the fierce and aimless warrior of the North,

> "Who left a name at which the world grows pale,
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale"?

What a contrast to such a career as this does history afford us in the character of that great man of the French Revolution, Mirabeau, who, whatever might be the aberrations of his character in other particulars—who, whatever truth there may be in the speculations as to his projected apostasy from the popular cause, had it not been anticipated by death—still was, as his character stands before us, single-hearted, using one great truth for the many purposes of that revolution which he was the agent of accomplishing! He was born for the destruction of feudalism—he felt his call; he devoted his soul to the beating down of that monster, and uplifting the "rights of man"—and he accomplished his work. He was not a man of party—he did not himself voluntarily bear the fetters and follow the guidance of others, or attempt to gather any particular class around himself—his party were the nation—they were the people

—and through them, they were the millions of the earth's enslaved inhabitants, spread over all countries and belonging to all times. The voice of countless millions was in his energies, in that memorable exclamation, when a royal mandate was sent for the assembly to dissolve, that he and his coadjutors were there by the voice of the people, and that nothing should drive them thence but the bayonets of tyranny. The inscription is underneath his statue in the Hall of Deputies at Paris. There it stands, after so many political vicissitudes of the past—after the scenes of Louis XVI.'s career, his decapitation, the republic, the consulate, the empire, the restoration, the return from Elba, the second restoration of the three days, and the commencement of the present dynasty—there it stands, and there it will stand while France has appreciation or gratitude—there it stands; but its base is not the narrow pedestal on which it is there elevated—no—nor all Paris itself, with all its halls and palaces—it is the entire soil of France, rescued by the energies of his eloquence and power from the feudal privileges that made that soil sterile, and crushed its peasantry beneath the yoke which had endured for so many ages.

We might select from ancient and modern times numerous instances of men who have exhibited such truth to the principles which they profess and to the object which they sought, and of others, perhaps of finer intellect and larger knowledge, who had no such devotedness; we might trace such a contrast of Burke and of Chatham here, in the characteristic difference of Cicero and Demosthenes in older times. Whatever impression may be produced by the rhetorical beauty in the orations of one class, in such men as Burke and Cicero,—it is the earnestness, the intensity, the straightforward direction of every power of soul and body to one purpose, of such men as Chatham and Demosthenes, that command our lasting praise.

Wherever there is truth, it is sure to have its appropriate sphere of influence. Wherever even falsehood prevails for a while in the world, it is because it has come into antagonism with some greater falsehood, and established itself as a comparative truth. The Pelagian heresy is quite inconsistent with any sound philosophy of the human mind —it violates even the elementary principles on which any rational theory of our nature or powers, the way in which

our faculties are developed, can be constructed; and yet, from the time when Pelagius started it to the time when it was adopted by Arminius, or the more recent period when it was popularised in this country by the preaching of Wesley, and made the distinctive badge of the followers whom he collected, this falsehood had its acceptance with humanity, because it was antagonistic to the yet greater falsehood of man's being bound to observe a law which his own nature renders him incapable of fulfilling, and which yet his Creator visits with the penalty of an eternity of suffering. The mind recoils strongly from the injustice, from the atrocity, of this representation, and lays hold of a faith whose errors might be obvious to all who think upon the subject, because it is in more consonance with all the best feelings of our hearts.

And so with the spread of Mahometanism. No doubt the system is one of superstition, error, and absurdity; yet it would be very childish to say that Mahometanism gained its establishment and extension merely by the sword. It was indebted to something much stronger than force. It was the greater corruption and absurdity of nominal Christianity which gave power to the first apostles of Mahometanism; and the Arabian prophet, impostor if he was, had the strength of truth in opposition to the falsification of the then-existing priesthood. Let there be but an atom of truth, as I have before remarked, and it will have its sphere of influence, and will work powerfully when it comes in contact with falsehood.

When Peter the Hermit went forth, in honest fanaticism preaching a crusade against the Saracenic possessors of the Holy Land, the hearts of believers throughout Europe responded to the call; the baron forsook his castle, and the serf his plough; all ages caught the enthusiasm, and even children took the cross, and set out on the crusade to aid in the redemption of the Holy Sepulchre. The military gallantry of the Saracens and the gradual development of political institutions in Europe, dispelled the illusion, never to be repeated. There was truth in the feelings of Peter the Hermit, so far as it went; yet in time it became a weakness, a folly deserving the pity of the historian, even as he records the deeds of energy which were wrought under its influence.

In Rome, an enthusiastic friar has more than once changed the face of society. By fervent denunciations, by strong appeals to the more powerful superstitions of that Church, individuals have been led to divest themselves of all unnecessary luxury and costliness of dress, and submit to voluntary penance; and the sound of the lash has echoed in the churches from morning till night, and from week to week. The enthusiasm passes away—reason smiles at it—the small germ of truth there might be in it is lost in falsehood—its incompatibility with the tendency of society dismisses it into oblivion; and the world goes on as before.

The moral eloquence of such a preacher as Massillon becomes a power in society, from its truth: the despot, the sovereign, hears it, and is impressed—courtiers stand appalled and aghast at his boldness—his denunciations roll like thunder in ears that had only been accustomed to the softest and sweetest sounds—confession is made, penance endured—some species of external reformation is effected, and carried as far as the observances of the Catholic Church and its *morale* permit, and then that too passes away.

An eloquent preacher arises in our own country, such as Jeremy Taylor, who, rich in the stores, and in the luxuriant exercise, of his imagination, anticipates futurity, death, judgment, eternity. That fancy, which should only have dwelt among sights and sounds that were kindred to it—with the song of birds, or with the beauty of flowers, or with the brightness of the stars—realises the horrors of eternal agony; it makes us hear the screams of those who are enduring tortures inflicted by a Power that is properly infinite, and that can extend its agency of agony to every capacity of soul and body. While his own heart recoils, as ours does, his own truth comes into contact with the falsehood of the system—he flinches from the contemplation of the result—he expresses his doubts of the utter depravity of human nature, one of the consecrated articles of his Church's faith; and we find him groping after some unpromised exercise of mercy in the dark ages of futurity, to allay the horrors which had been conjured up by his own fancy acting on his own professed doctrines.

A man like Jonathan Edwards, the American divine, has no such qualms—he looks the horrors of eternity, according to the description of his faith, full in the face—he makes

up his mind, and tells Christians to make up their minds, to the results, the just and wise results as he deems them, of the Divine judgment—he tells them that they shall become reconciled to the eternal damnation of those whom they hold most dear—that they shall see the glory of God in the torments of eternity—nay, that these sufferings shall give a relish (his own word), an increased zest and enjoyment, to the happiness of the righteous, as they raise their songs of gratitude and triumph, and hear the distant and ceaseless wailings of the pit of torment. In a few minds, this unhesitating theory exercises a complete and commanding power; but with the world at large, the incompatibility is felt with what belongs to the best conceptions of humanity and futurity: it is deprived of power; and to obtain any degree of popularity, it must be modified, smoothed, and explained away.

It is worth observing how much truth has been aided in its progress by fiction. In a despotic country, for example, a man must not go forth, unless inclined to peril his head,—or even in a limited monarchy, without some danger and inconvenience,—and say that a republic is the form of social arrangement under which men ought to exist. But he may put this into the mouth, in a literary composition, of Rienzi, the last of the Roman tribunes, or some such character; and perhaps a despot may read it, and think it a fine work of imagination.

The commercial interests of a country hold a peril over the head of him who attempts directly and by argument to struggle with them; and yet, if a man shows the simplicity and beauty of a different state of society—if he speculates upon allaying the spirit of sordid selfishness and uniting men in nobler bonds than often hold them together —why, this may pass for an inoffensive work, and those who are the most devoted to the eager strife of Mammon may say it is pleasant reading for relaxation after their hours of business. King David, no doubt, was glad to hear of cases of petty oppression occurring in his country, which, with the summary exercise of judgment and justice that belongs to an Eastern monarch, he interfered with and rectified; and so Nathan the prophet, although vested with an authority to which the monarch bowed, thought it wisest and safest to begin with the parable of the poor man and

his one lamb, before he thundered in his ears, "Thou art the man!" on a charge of atrocious criminality. This use and action of fiction justifies the well-known saying of Fletcher of Saltoun, "Let who will make the laws of a nation, so that I make their songs." It is in their works of fiction that we see what nations are, and trace the powers by which they are influenced. No inquiry into the laws of a nation or its governmental arrangements can give such a notion of what its life is as its works of fictitious delineation,—its plays, novels, and romances.

Nor is fiction reflection merely. There is original power in it; there is the security I have just mentioned; and, beyond that, it often leads an author to speculate more boldly and freely than he would under other circumstances. Wise and virtuous as Sir Thomas More assuredly was, there is evidence in his judicial conduct, there is evidence in the sincere effusions of his mind at other times, and in his public pleading against the then advancing Reformation, that he did not think so freely under ordinary circumstances as when he was in the act of writing his *Utopia*. And so in Bacon's views of the New Atlantis. He tells us that few things were more odious among the inhabitants of that imagined region than the acceptance of bribes by the administrators of justice; and he wrote this at a time when, if not with his own personal knowledge and connivance, yet in such a way as must have led to a shrewd suspicion, his own servants were carrying on a system of bribery which occasioned his fall, and involved him in the condemnation passed by men not less corrupt, assuredly, than he could have been in his worst days.

But a yet higher power for the development of truth belongs to fictitious writing, in the self-communion to which it leads. It has been said, and there is much philosophy in the distinction, that eloquence is heard—poetry is overheard. It is of the nature of a soliloquy—it is of the effusion of individual thought and feeling, without reference to others; and in proportion as it partakes of this character, as it rises to the full height of this description, does it become, perhaps, the purest shrine in which truth is ever preserved. It was in blindness and seclusion that Milton devoted himself to his great work; and we find that he was not averse from, nay, that he rejoiced in, the

addition to those of the darkness and stillness of night. It was frequently in the night that he poured forth some of the noblest passages of his great poem; and what is that poem, but the outshadowing of the truth of his own soul—but a display of the intense realisation which he had by inward sense of whatever is most lovely or grand in nature and most capable of imperishable combination? All the beings of that poem, from the Supreme Father on his celestial throne to the rebel spirit amid his dark legions in the dominion of torment below, are but modes of the poet's mind—manifestations of different portions of his being, as the entire grandeur and complete truth of that being is apparent when we consider them in their union, and look at the mighty spirit of the whole composition. And so, when Spenser tells us of Una and her milk-white lamb, whose presence made a sunshine in the shady place, and how she tarried unharmed and secure amid savage beings and the wild monsters of the forest,—he is conveying to us in this fiction a conception of beauty and purity, the entertaining of which was one of the noblest characteristics of his own mind; and in proportion as it is by the poem conveyed from his mind to others, they are purified, are simplified, are raised by the contemplation. And so with the *Pilgrim's Progress* of John Bunyan. What is it but a portion of the autobiography of the writer, and that of the most truthful and interesting kind? This was not the result of intention. His purpose was, by allegory, to inculcate certain Calvinistic doctrines, the belief of which he held essential to salvation. But what he contemplated and what he did were different things, because, when he applied himself to the work, the spirit of truth in fiction was over his soul, and led him to realise its workings. We learn the irksomeness of incarceration—we find the earnestness of joy in escape from spiritual danger —we find contests with the supposed invisible powers who were tempting him,—the great outlines of John Bunyan's own personal experience,—we find these fashioning the imagery and creating the events of the book. He knew what it was to fly with the speed of one who is hotly pursued from the city of destruction—he knew what it was to combat with Apollyon in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The harsh faces and voices of his gaolers, driving

his imagination back into antagonistic conceptions and relations, would help to give that gentleness and beauty which belong to the female characters of his tale—to his Christiana and his Mercy; and no doubt the noisome vapours of his actual dungeon must often have been felt as he describes the fresh, free air of the Delectable Mountains. The truth to Bunyan's own nature gave power to his wit. A bishop before him had written similar things, and nobody ever reads the book now, except perhaps some curious collector. So Bunyan himself failed when, in other circumstances, and circumstances that would have been deemed more favourable, he produced that cold and unreadable allegory of the *Holy War*, of the contest for the soul of man. It was the deep self-communion of his dungeon that made him a poet. The *Pilgrim's Progress* has become a work of power, which will probably outlive the creed it was designed to defend, and the experience of which it was meant to be the typical narration.

And when the writer of fiction means to act upon others—when he takes their minds into account as well as his own—when he realises their presence—it is the best portion of our nature, its more general and enduring properties, that present themselves to his fancy, and not that which is external, temporary, or merely conventional, or the result of prejudice. To act upon man, he must appeal to what belongs to humanity, to the elemental principles of our being, which, as they preëxisted, are destined to survive the various modifications of society; and hence it is that there is so much that belongs to all countries and all times embodied in compositions which were originally produced, like the tragedies of ancient Greece, for a single representation before the inhabitants of the country assembled on some high festival.

In many ways are people made to feel the truth there is in fiction. "Guilty creatures, sitting at a play," have felt their own crimes emblazoned in the passing scene. The statesman, the legislative leader of a party, has refreshed himself in his weariness, after the toils of debate, by taking up some romance of the olden time; and the lofty spirit of chivalry exhibited there has branded sternly the compromise, the want of principle and devotedness, in his own character. The slave of Mammon has, by the

visions of poetry and romance, been made at least to suspect that he is a mere bondsman and a slave; and if he have not sufficient nerve given him to break his fetters, it is something to let him know that they are fetters. While the divine, taking up the last new poem of the day, is providing some beam of eloquence to glimmer over his next sermon.

There is a spirit of fiction in the world, mightier than the sword, mightier than the law, mightier than the conventionalisms of society. It pervades all things. It may be little thought of—it may be regarded as merely performing a lowly ministration to their amusement — it may be the passing breeze that is to refresh them when they are wearied with the heat and toil of the day—or, perhaps, it may be the flowing stream that serves to turn the mill-wheel of application to their ordinary vocations; but, whatever they think of it, it is far above this — it is a power secretly and silently working in all directions — the power of the truth which it enshrines. What are the most powerful parts of scripture? What but the parables of Christ? — what but its fictitious portions, rather than the realities of its history and its controversy? These cannot be interpreted and verified as others are. No diligence of the topographical antiquary can assign to the vineyard of the parable its precise locality in the plains or on any hill-side of Judæa. The father, in another parable, is unnamed; and if he were, we probably might search in vain for any antique record in the old Jewish genealogies, to see what position he occupied, from what origin he was descended. The good shepherd was not known to the priests of Jerusalem as one whom they could identify as having brought the firstling of his flock to pay the temple dues and be offered in sacrifice. The sower that went forth to sow had no name that could be found in the roll when Augustus issued his decree that all the world should be taxed. And I apprehend that proclamation might in vain have been made throughout the whole region of Samaria for him who travelled from Jerusalem by Jericho.

The contentious Jews, in their synagogues, were real beings. The supplicating Christians of Rome, who led the apostle to dive so deeply into the origin of evil in the

world, and the effect of Adam's sin,—they were realities; and so were the sectarian Christians of the Corinthian Church. But these, and all the controversies of which they have been the occasion, and all the creeds which have originated from them,—what are they, in moral power, to the higher species of truth in the parables of Christ?

The Predestinarian, while he is arguing on the absolute certainty of the Divine election, will yet try to sow some seed in human nature, and expect to realise the produce, and reap it with joy; or he will even, if he be a Sabbatarian also, leave his faith and forms, to follow his own stray sheep, though it should be on a Sunday, into the wilderness whither it has wandered. The bigot, while he is denouncing all communion with heretics, while he is bringing texts to show that we should not wish God-speed to such, but regard them as heathens and publicans, will yet, under the influence of another parable, without making any inquisition into the faith of the sufferer, pour balm into the bleeding wounds of some one who has been assailed and plundered and oppressed on his earthly course. And the heart even of the stern father has sometimes relaxed,—he has looked wistfully towards, and longed to welcome back to his embrace, his returning prodigal son,—even at the very moment that he is culling and arranging texts for the purpose of showing that he is justified in arraying the Deity with the obduracy of a demon.

ON TRUTH.

No. VI.

May 6th, 1838.

In the course of lectures which I this morning bring to a conclusion, there has been occasion to delineate those benefactors of mankind who, in the institutions they founded, or through the enduring works of art which they produced, or the anticipations of futurity which they taught men to entertain, may be regarded as the agents of the progress of humanity,—the sowers of the seed—the good seed—of truth, and beauty, and utility, and hope. In describing them, it could not but be remarked that their general destiny was to be either neglected or comparatively unappreciated in their own times, or to be persecuted with active animosity. In whatever sphere they laboured, this circumstance gives an identity of colouring to the pages of history which records their labours and the bounties they bestowed upon the world. We find that the advantage of their institutions was often not recognised, and that only an unwilling and murmuring submission was yielded to laws that tended to raise men from a state akin to that of the brute or of the savage to that of social and rational beings. We find that those whose works tended to purify the feelings, to refine the taste, to elevate the soul, had, by the posthumous tributes which were rendered to their memory and to their achievements by individuals of like elevation with themselves, to gain fame before they commanded admiration; and that, in religion, the attempt at reformation, however gross the ecclesiastical abuses against which it was directed, continually occasioned the brand of heresy to be fixed upon the reformer, and excited the bigotry of his compatriots, who were often satisfied with nothing less than the infliction upon him of death.

Such men have always been in advance of their age and country. They must have been so, in order to be the forerunners of a general progress in human nature; for the advance of mankind, or its progress, is an expression that applies rather to the state of general intellect than to the position attained by individuals of superior mind or genius. The physical sciences are necessarily of slow growth, and built up by the gradual accumulation of facts; the great principles of the moral sciences unfold themselves at once to those whose reflective and introspective disposition can pierce to the depths of their own nature. We notice similar facts in the development of art; Phidias had as clear a conception and as majestic an execution of the grand and the sublime in his sculpture as had Michael Angelo in his painting. The knowledge shown of the diversities of human character, and of those modifications of it which are adapted to poetical delineation, whether epic or dramatic, is as great in the poets of ancient Greece as in those of modern Europe, even of those whose names are brightest in the literary annals of our own country: Æschylus and Homer wear their laurels unwithered even by the side of Shakespeare and of Milton. In law, the penetration of Moses into the needs of society—the influences calculated to restrain savage ferocity and ignorance—to transform slaves into freemen—to create a people out of a horde of savages—strikes us with as much admiration, is in itself as good an exhibition of jurisprudential skill, as that which collected and embodied the Code of Justinian. While Socrates, limited to that small circle in which an Athenian citizen moved, although consulting only his own conversational aptitudes and the wants and tendencies of his time and country, yet had as clear and firm a grasp of the principle of utility as had Bentham in the midst of those multifarious calculations by which he carried it out and applied it to the different modes of forming and administering the laws which may be best adapted to securing the interest and promoting the prosperity of an extended empire.

It is not in the succession of individual beings of this order that we must look for continuous advancement. It is not in reference to God's gift of genius that the term "progress of humanity" has place. It belongs, as I have

just remarked, to the slow accumulation of facts, the classification of which constitutes physical science, and to that slow advancement of the human mind, which is so continually impeded in its progress by the necessity of labour, and by the toilsome occupations which occupy man from the rising to the setting of the sun, and seem almost to reduce him to the stationary condition of the animal creation, and which often, when aided by despotic and oppressive institutions, preclude any hope of advancement, save by the intervention of foreign agency. Numerous and extensive are the tribes of Africa and of Asia; yet they seem so incapable of the stimulus that acts with strength upon the European races, that one can scarcely anticipate that, under any other circumstances than those of subjugation by more enlightened nations, they can be enabled at last to take their proper place in the family of man, and bear their share in the common advancement.

Teachers of mankind have been misunderstood. They have had to grapple, in the first instance, with ignorance, with gross and pervading ignorance, in the many. But ignorance might be imagined to be teachable—it might be supposed conscious of its own deficiency, groaning under the sense of its darkness, groping after the light, and most grateful for any ray of intellectual brightness that might be kindled up by those who raised the beacon aloft and pointed out the path of advancement. The impediment to this has been in the sense of immediate interest, as obscured by ignorance, and brought into a state of positive hostility against the efforts of those who were consulting the improvement of mankind. The Israelites in the wilderness, instead of exulting in the new freedom they had acquired—instead of feeling what it was to be free from the fetters of Egyptian bondage, no longer to hear the voice or feel the lash of the taskmaster, and to be no more driven to make bricks without straw, and pile up the enduring pyramids that should be the monuments of their masters' grandeur of conception, while their own intensity and endurance of toil and hardship should pass into comparative oblivion—instead of exulting in the prospect which was open before them, in the hope of becoming a people and nation, a community in which the advantage of individuals might be made subservient to the general good,—were looking

back with anxiety and with base desire to the fleshpots of Egypt, and murmuring against their leader, Moses, for not taking them again into bondage. So with the multitudes of the Roman people in the later days of their history. Their ignorance was fixed in its hostility to the light by which it might have been dispelled, by that interest which was most immediate and most pressing to them—by the desire of ceaseless gratification in the sports of the amphitheatre, where wild beasts and men were, from day to day, brought forth for their amusement, to struggle in deadly conflict and shed streams of blood, that they might enjoy the sight and be gratified by the stimulus; and for the sake of such pleasures as these, they sacrificed the principles and character which had distinguished their republic in its earlier and better days, until they sank into a mere race of slaves; and they whose prowess and bold spirit had subjugated the world, and made the Roman empire coextensive with what was known of civilisation, became the meanest, the vilest, and the most cringing of slaves.

And, in modern times, how often is the combination of ignorance with supposed immediate interest the occasion of misleading men from the course which they should pursue—of stopping their ears to the sounds that would bring them instruction—of shutting their eyes to the light that would kindle up within them the noblest and most expansive hopes! Labour groans under the power of monopoly. In commercial countries, the spirit of monopoly, growing out of associations that are at first most useful, extends itself through society, and makes its heavy hand felt by all classes; and yet all classes, instead of abolishing the evil under which they groan, only counteract it by setting up different evils; and those who toil, and whose interests have suffered the most heavily from the power of monopoly, strive to make even their own toil an exclusive right or monopoly, refusing the opportunity of participation in it to their brethren when suffering like distress with themselves, —thus aggravating the very mischief from which it is most desirable the masses of the people should be delivered. There is, therefore, a common supposed interest of ignorance stimulating the persecution of those who aim at amelioration.

Besides these, there are different class-interests, sure to spring up in the formation and advancement of society, that act upon the great mass of power, and wield it for their peculiar purposes. A military class springs up from the sense of danger, from the need of repelling external force, from the primary necessity of security from violence; and the class thus formed, by its very peculiarity and by its position, learns to domineer over the feebleness which it was formed to protect. It creates an interest in war—it associates gain and advancement, honour and influence, with the destruction of human life, until blood flows in torrents and in oceans—it perverts the course of commercial prosperity or of literary progress, and gives to society an antagonistic character, for the gratification of individual ambition. In the enactment and administration of the law, a legal class springs up in society—at first needful, as the human machinery by which institutions are to be brought into contact with the transactions of common life; but its sinister interest is soon found in the introduction of complication and chicanery into that which ought to be of the very plainest and simplest kind, and most generally applicable to men's wants and concerns, to their rights and their wrongs; and thus the very agency of administering the law becomes the means of creating a class that thrives by the denial or the delay of justice. Disparities in human nature, diversities of bodily strength or of mental energy and acquirement, produce what, at the outset of institutions, may be called natural distinctions. It is the tendency of these also to form a class, to grow into an artificial aristocracy, to secure those powers of legislation and supremacy which enable a set of men to turn to their own account what should be the common property of the community, and to raise their own greatness on the depression of the many. While, in the service of religion, the sacerdotal class, finding its account in the promotion of the superstitions that belong to ignorance, has too generally cherished those superstitions, carried to the utmost extreme those that were most closely connected with its own spiritual ascendency over the minds of the people, and thus reacted powerfully against all improvement in what related to topics of the deepest concern for the future, as well as for the present, state of existence.

The reformer is apt to draw on himself the hostility of one or other of these powerful classes, perhaps of all of them in combination: for they have a common interest, and are alive to the perception of it; and while they are thus united and active, the great masses of society, uninformed and unthinking, have been too commonly at their beck, to act as they might dictate, in any way, even though it were most destructive of their own real interests. Hence, we see the multitude clamouring, at the instigation of the priests, for the crucifixion of Christ; we find them, at a later period, ready for the excitement of destroying, by wholesale, those who were pursuing a simpler and purer form of faith and worship than was inculcated by the priesthood; we find them ready to be banded as hireling soldiers against the promotion of that liberty without which they themselves are nothing in society but its hewers of wood and drawers of water. Nor is this all. There is yet another action of antagonism to good, which, in some respects, is more powerful than any, or than all, of these. The sense of religion, the ideas of duty, of morality, are generally prevalent; and as they are productive of the highest good, when illumined by knowledge and directed to truth, so may they turn to the greatest mischief, when they are only wandering in darkness, or are in the pursuit of falsehood and of mischief. Nothing can be more formidable than conscience, when conscience perversely transforms the wrong into the right—the pernicious into the good. Bigotry may form conscience. A man who thinks that his neighbour is in danger of forfeiting heaven—is polluting and destroying his soul—is likely to incur the pains and penalties of endless damnation,—will not be very nice as to the means by which he endeavours to extricate him from this fearful state; he will make it a matter of conscience to do whatever he thinks will tend to that object, even though it should be an invasion of civil rights—though it should be in direct violation of that mental freedom of which all ought to be in possession. And so of vanity and worldliness, which thrive by consulting the condition, the maxims, the prejudices, of others; which dignify with the name of prudence a conformity with the course that society prescribes, without any very minute examination into its intrinsic character, or its ultimate tendencies. Thus, it

forms a conscience—it becomes a rule of life for the individual; and although, in the first instance, he may have some latent suspicion of the fallacy which there is in his moral code, yet that wears out,—or, at least, it wears out in the minds of his descendants who were brought up under his teaching; until, at last, maxims are consecrated as sacred principles of duty that, in their origin, were the dictates of the meanest servility—the mere force of habit becomes incorporated in the complex notion which we call conscience. How often do people exclaim: "I know that to be wrong; it violates my moral sense of duty"!—and what is the meaning of this, but that it is inconsistent with their habitual associations? Under what influence these associations may have been formed—what may be their particular tendency—what may be their character, when subjected to any thing like moral analysis—is a totally different question; it is mere habit, and familiarity with certain classes of associations, that thus becomes a conscience in the mind,—and those different principles, continually acting, are continually to be found in combination; and we have those who are ready to risk every earthly good—who are ready, perhaps, even to peril their own lives—for the dictates of a conscience which, after all, may be nothing more than a compound of the practical maxims of bigotry and vanity—of worldliness and habit.

We may find cases in which such a morality as this has been openly and boldly countenanced, and held up to veneration. People often talk and write even yet of "our great moralist," Dr. Johnson: and, according to this theory, he may be called a great moralist; but what, if we look to his life and writings, was the morality by which both were pervaded? It was that of a religion to be inherited from parents, to be received from them, and not to have the powers of rational investigation applied to it; for his bitterest censures, his most dogmatic denunciations, were levelled at individuals who had simply dared to think for themselves, and the extent of whose offence was the adoption of a modification of Christianity differing from that which their parents professed. It implied no scrupulous examination of evidence, but associated the grandest truths with the silliest falsehood, and supported such a hope as that of the immortality of the human soul by stories of the

appearance of ghosts certified by justices of the peace. It had no reverence for the rights of nations: "Taxation no tyranny" was the political maxim of his morality; although that taxation was levied by a distant and dominant power upon thousands and millions of free spirits, capable of managing their own concerns, and claiming their own rights, and who were totally unrepresented in the body by which such taxation was imposed. It was a morality full of ancient prejudice and antipathy, and yet ready to forego that prejudice for the sake of individual personal gratification, and the enjoyment of the servility of any one who would render servile offices; hating, for instance, in profession, the Scotch character, and even the Scotch country, and so blinding the physical perception of the individual as to make him deny much that there was of richness, beauty, and grandeur within the scope of common vision at the very moment when he was penning down his libels,—and yet satisfied and gratified with the constant attendance of one who was noting all his sayings in a book, in order that the world might be astonished with his conversational wisdom;—a morality full of the conventional prejudice of criticism and party spirit, so as to make the writer most blind as a commentator to the splendid beauties of Shakespeare, most unjust as a biographer to the exalted virtues of Milton; ready to forego even its hereditary prejudices under the influence of the smiles of power, and transforming, as an offering to royalty, the Jacobite devotedness of youth to a subserviency to that very house by which the object of ancient loyalty had been supplanted;—and, with a religion circumscribing the bounties of its charity, making even the donation of alms to one of a different sect, or a different modification of the same sect, an act of the most superlative liberality;—which, pouring contempt on all other forms and modifications of faith, could yet find so little satisfaction or solid resting-ground in its own, as to contemplate the advance of death with an unmanly terror and apprehension that could shake even his giant frame.

Such is the world's great moralist—such the conscientiousness which, now and then embodied in an individual who is raised by literary celebrity to a conspicuous position, is ever pervading society, and is ever opposing its strength

—and great indeed is its strength—to those who, by instructing, enlightening, and calling into exercise the mental faculties of their fellow-creatures, would confer the best bounties upon humanity. This is the sort of conscientiousness that has prevailed from the earliest times in society—which, in Judæa, killed the prophets of contemporary generations, and built and adorned the sepulchres of those of previous generations; and which, after a long succession of persecution, rejected the Christ, and went on in that infatuated career which occasioned the destruction of the temple, of the city, and of the Jewish polity. This is the conscientiousness which, in the middle ages, was ever ready to look aghast at any thing like freedom of opinion, any divergence from the established creed,—which was jealous even of philosophical speculations and inquiry, and ever saw sorcery and witchcraft in a higher acquaintance with physical science than had been commonly attained;—the conscientiousness that persecuted Friar Bacon as he was pursuing his ingenious course of inquiry, and laying the first foundation-stones of modern science,—that told strange tales of his magic brazen head, only showing thereby the enormity of its own front of brass,—that sent Galileo to his dungeon, there to meditate on the stability of the sun and the motion of the earth,—that vilified Lord Bacon, and exulted in the fall of that great man, and heaped upon him accusations which proceeded from those guilty of far greater offences than any which could be fairly imputed to him,—which ordered the books of Milton to be burnt by the common hangman,—and which, in a like spirit—for it was Church-of-England as well as Puritan—it belongs to all parties in turn, and especially to parties in power—which, in a like spirit, expelled Locke from the University of Oxford,—which suppressed the papers of Newton, that the world might not see the extent to which his mind had penetrated and speculated in concerns of religious antiquity or doctrine,—and that thus, enshrined in the bosom of a single individual, stayed for thirty years the solution of the question of Catholic Emancipation: the upraising of one hand impeding the advance of the tide of civil and religious liberty, and making one portion of the empire slaves, and another tyrants, in defiance of their common rights, their common interests, and the advancement of that freedom of conscience and equality of civil

condition which belongs to the very elemental principles of harmonious and progressive society.

Throughout these lectures I have uniformly distinguished attachment to dogma from the love of truth. The one connects itself with imposition, the other with freedom. Respect for individual rights—respect for social rights of mind and of thought,—is the great good which the world's benefactors in past times have achieved by the assertion of their own opinions, though they might not entertain an actual perception of this advantage. And to this it is that we look for future progress. Whatever dogmas may arise or be formed—whatever theories may be invented or become obsolete—it is not with the continuance, it is not with the advancing influence, of this or that set of questions or of institutions that I would link any bright and gladdening anticipations; but it is with the growing recognition of the rights of mind and conscience, in their frank, free, and full allowance by all to all. This, and this alone, constitutes the progress of truth. It leaves man free to receive the influences which flow in upon him from the universe in which he is placed, which are the influences of knowledge, of truth, and of God, and which can only be obstructed by human interposition and imposition. All established religions, for instance, are violations of this—violations of the rights of nations, if they are imposed by a minority upon a majority; and violations of the rights of individuals, if they are imposed by a majority upon a minority. They are alike mischievous in both cases; for it may be that the minority, however limited, contains within itself those whom Providence has destined, by more expansive thoughts, by a far-seeing disposition of the mind, to indicate the way in which humanity is to make a further step in advance.

It may be said, Is individual conviction in all cases to be followed? is it ever to constitute morality? And I reply, that it ever must do so to the individual himself: he can have no better, no other standard. If there be now and then cases in which its results are so eccentric as to be incompatible with the condition, the existence, or the peace of society, society must exert its own power for its own preservation; but it should do so, not by spiritual denunciations, not by proclaiming that to be vice which does not

accord with its own conscience,—but recognising the honesty, the devotedness, the virtue, which there may be even in the grossest fanaticism, and staying its hand the moment its own security will allow. God has linked together the interests, the feelings, the prospects, of all portions of his conscious creation. Reverence leads the many, when once they feel the good that has been bestowed, to fix their attention and direct their hearts to the individuals who are its agents; while those, in proportion to the very elevation they possess, realise the interest and well-being of the many, and feel themselves one in fraternity with mankind. Past ages are linked with the present by the influence which they shed over us—by those records which are in themselves a stimulus and power of advancement; and in this, again, we find the germ of the future leading us still onward, and showing that which is to be enshrined in that which is.

The material and the mental worlds have their points of union, blending them together. Where to trace the ultimate limit, the cessation of this composite world, we cannot tell. It is around us—we belong to it; it embraces all things which concern humanity; and in itself we regard it as truth: we see it pervaded by the very spirit of Divinity.

In the commencement of this course, I characterised the love of truth as a noble and natural passion—as that which indicates itself even in the child, when not perverted by unwise training; and which is not more obviously connected with our temporary interests, than with our ultimate good, and is the source of whatever dignity the human constitution can realise. From this point we have advanced through the different topics that have occupied these lectures. It was shown that truth is practical—that it is no cold abstraction—no mere reverie—no concern of interest solely to speculative minds; but that it involves our daily concerns—belongs to the hourly occupation of all classes of human beings. I have endeavoured to enforce the application of the love of truth to the means as well as to the end; and have shown that the practice of pious frauds—the indulgence, for the purpose of persuasion, of the use of arguments which do not commend themselves to the individual's mind—ever tends to deteriorate the mind; and that even fiction owes its beneficent power to the moral truth which is therein

enshrined. Thus regarded, truth blends itself with our being. Each individual is its standard or measure to himself; and then upon his individual mind do all the powers of nature and all the diversities of humanity cast their forms, until the universe is, as it were, again created in his consciousness, perception, and reflectiveness. Thus is the world identified with truth and with God. Thus does the pursuit of truth and its acquirement take the form of religion—of religion, not as it is embodied in sectarian dogmas, not as it is enforced in technical theological discourses—but of religion as it belongs to nature, as it belongs to the creature in his communion with the Creator by whose presence he is surrounded. And this view is confirmed by the mode in which increasing knowledge flows in upon the world—which is such as that almost every discovery may be regarded as a suggestion, an intimation, a revelation; and all wisdom as the inspiration of the Most High. Its recipients in the first instance have had to encounter toil and peril and persecution in their endeavours to communicate it to others; but they have had abundant consolation in their own bosoms—the spirit that was in them, the spirit of the true and of the good, has not failed eventually to assert its inherent superiority over the darkness and feebleness of ignorance. And thus has the subject passed before us, leading us on to the anticipation of further advances in the world; until such a state shall be realised as that, if a philosopher returned from the grave, he would say, This is not earth, but Utopia; if a Christian returned, he would say, This is not the world, but Paradise. And here we pause from the further pursuit of this subject. It is all-comprehensive; but, though comprehensive, it may perhaps more advantageously become matter of reflection than of continued elucidation. All thoughts, all goodness, all enjoyment, all anticipation, all modifications of life, all connection with our fellow-creatures and with the external universe, all communion with our God,—all are but different phases of Truth—Truth infinite and everlasting.

CRITICISM ON CHALMERS' DEFENCE OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

No. I.

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The argument recently put forth by Dr. Chalmers, on behalf of the establishment and the extension of National Churches, deserves attention on various accounts, among which may prominently be reckoned its bearing upon several questions at this time agitated, and of great practical importance; such as the discussions relating to the Irish Church, on which must depend the peace of that country; the claims of English Dissenters, especially their protest against ecclesiastical taxation in the form of church-rates; and the efforts of the Established Church of Scotland to obtain a national grant for its own extension, by the erection of more places of worship in its communion. Beyond these immediate and practical concerns, the argument involves the vital topic of religious liberty and equality, and also that most deeply interesting question of national education, of which the practicability and the utility cannot be dissociated from the notions held by religious sects and denominations, the pretensions they advance, and the position they occupy in the community. To this intrinsic importance of the subject, we may add the claims of the author to respectful notice, and the tendency of the time, and of the various circumstances under which his argument is submitted to the public, to assist it in making, in certain circles, a favourable and a strong impression. We may consider ourselves and others as invited to take it into our consideration; to show wherein it is valid, wherein unsound; how far it carries with it acceptance and conviction, and where we are compelled to stop short and pronounce it inconclusive or sophistical.

I cannot add to these reasons, that I think the argu-

ment advanced by Dr. Chalmers on behalf of National Churches remarkable for its originality or for its peculiar force. It is, in fact, but a different mode of presenting the argument previously urged by Dr. Paley in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*. Substantially, the course of alleged proof is the same. There are, however, two differences not unworthy of being noticed. The first difference between the arguments as developed, first by Dr. Paley, and now by Dr. Chalmers, is, that the one argues and the other takes for granted the first step of the process, namely, the necessity of keeping up a distinct class of Christian teachers, a priesthood educated and set apart for the purpose of teaching Christianity. This, which is the very foundation of the whole, is reasoned upon by Dr. Paley in a manner which shows his own sense of its importance; it is altogether assumed, without any argument whatever, throughout the lectures of Dr. Chalmers.

The reasons assigned by Dr. Paley for the necessity of such a class of persons are—first, the learning required for teaching Christianity; the acquaintance which is needful with classical literature, with the Hebrew language, in addition to the Greek and Latin, with Oriental customs and antiquities, with the principles of biblical criticism, and their application to the scriptures, and various other kindred topics; and, secondly, the rarity of aptitude for discharging the functions of a Christian teacher among those who are only brought up for the ordinary purposes of civil life.

It is, doubtless, not expedient for the advocates of existing establishments in this country to keep these arguments for a priesthood constantly and broadly before the public mind, because it is matter of notoriety that, with all the costly apparatus in its possession, the Church of England has by no means distinguished itself for the qualifications of its priests, either as biblical scholars or as popular teachers and pastors. For the employment of learning of various kinds, in the elucidation or establishment of the scriptures, the Church of England is considerably behind most other Churches, whether dissenting and native, or foreign. The most ample illustrations of the ancient writings of the Hebrews; the most magnificent display of learning, and the profoundest research for their elucidation; the

most diligent and laborious application of whatever travellers have noted and recorded of those Eastern manners and customs that retain an identity with those of the individuals or the communities whose fortunes are there narrated; the most acute application of the principles of criticism to the verbal interpretation, whether of the New Testament or of the Old,—these things have been achieved, not by the members of the highly endowed Church of England, with its advantage of the exclusive possession of the national universities, but by professors of German universities, or by divines of dissenting denominations. Such writers as Lardner and Harmer, or as Michaelis, Rosenmüller, and Jahn, have enriched the great storehouse from which popular expositors derive whatever is most requisite for their purposes. The argument, therefore, as applied to the priests of the Anglican Church, is, in this respect, a complete failure.

Whether Dr. Paley's arguments, therefore, be sound or unsound—whether this first position of the whole process of proof be tenable or not—is a question which the able advocate to whom we are now adverting has passed over, has assumed for granted, has blinked altogether, and has thereby avoided comparisons that would have been by no means advantageous to the particular sect or sects whose interests he was advocating. If this be assumed, it would go far towards the assumption of the whole argument. The lectures of Dr. Chalmers, no doubt, were delivered, in the first instance, to an auditory among whom the necessity of the priesthood was scarcely likely to be questioned. But, then, if that was not likely to be questioned, neither was any other portion of the proposition he was endeavouring to establish likely to be questioned. The advocates of one are generally the advocates of the other; and the first being assumed, the whole argument might as well, for most purposes, have been assumed also.

But there is another difference between the argument as put by Dr. Paley and the argument as now repeated by Dr. Chalmers, which is not less striking than that to which I have just directed your notice. The reasoning of Dr. Paley in defence of religious establishments concludes with a remarkable concession. He says, in his chapter on this subject in his *Moral Philosophy:* "There are two

cases in which test-laws are wont to be applied, and in which, if in any, they may be defended. One is, where two or more religions are contending for establishment; and where there appears no way of putting an end to the contest, but by giving to one religion such a decided superiority in the legislature and government of the country, as to secure it against danger from any other. I own that I should assent to this precaution with many scruples." And now comes the admission on which I desire to fix your attention: "If the dissenters from the establishment become a majority of the people, the establishment itself ought to be altered or qualified."

Now, this concession would have had an awkward appearance in Dr. Chalmers' argument, because one main purpose of that argument is to uphold the Church of Ireland—a Church existing in defiance of the opinions and desires of an immense majority of the people of that country. There would have been an end at once of some of the great purposes for which these lectures have been put forth, if it were conceded that the majority of a people were to decide the form of their own National Church. Accordingly, he has been driven, in one case, to say that legislators are to decide upon the truth of religion—to judge between the truth of the Protestant and Catholic systems—not merely as legislators intrusted with powers for certain purposes by their fellow-citizens, but they are to inquire into the theological reality of one system or the other, and form their selection for an established Church accordingly. But as the application of this would have been rather embarrassing in reference to Ireland and Scotland, we have again an arbitrary power claimed for them, by which a minority may be installed in all the emoluments of an establishment, and retained therein at the will of the legislature, because, he says, there is generally an agreement on the main principles of theology, and it is a matter of convenience that, one sect being established, government should not change it in order to elevate any other.

Now, the effect of this is to disunite altogether the forms of national religion from the feeling of a majority of the inhabitants. The plea of any thing like agreement is one which can scarcely hold, as the lecturer himself considers there may be one-tenth of the inhabitants of this

country who entertain a different theology from that which is established. The concession is a large one, because it would scarcely appear, by his own or any other statistics, that more than two-tenths of the population entertain decided religious opinions at all; and if so large a proportion of the whole as one-tenth have arrived at different convictions of Christian truth from those of the majority, surely that fact requires some attention in the proceedings of the legislature, and should have some influence in its arrangements with respect to religion.

The coincidence of Dr. Paley's object with that of Dr. Chalmers is tolerably complete, with the exceptions that I have now specified. Dr. Chalmers argues for a legal support of the teachers of Christianity, for a territorial arrangement of their functions, and for the selection of a particular sect or denomination of Christians for this plan. And it may be observed, that suppose all this be established, how far are we then carried? how much is accomplished towards the defence of religious establishments as now actually existing in these islands, and as pressing hardly, as we think they do, upon the rights and privileges of a large portion of the community? Why, all that Dr. Chalmers professes to prove may be proved, and yet that which most interests the people in reference to an establishment remain comparatively untouched. All may be proved which he lays down as having established by evidence, and yet there is no proof of the desirableness of an established hierarchy—of gradations in the Church analogous to gradations in the State—of religion becoming the pretext for the dispensation of temporal authority—of a bishop or overseer of the Church becoming thereby a baron of the empire. All that he lays down as having proved may be proved, and yet nothing is done towards the establishment of a system of ecclesiastical taxation, of levying upon one man an impost which is to sustain the forms of worship and to promote the dissemination of the doctrine of another, which is, in the shape of fees, or rates, or tithes, to connect religion with fiscal proceedings, with the appropriation of people's property for that which they do not themselves contemplate or desire. All that he says is proved may be proved, and yet there is nothing which could justify such a linking of ecclesiastical interests with temporal interests, with

agricultural interests, as could engage the whole body of a Church in support of the taxation even on the article of bread itself, it being the means of enhancing the emoluments which that ecclesiastical body derives from tithes. All that Dr. Chalmers alleges himself to have proved may be proved, and yet nothing whatever may be done towards the establishment of a great religious lottery in the country —a lottery in which tickets are bought by the education of the junior branches of a family at a considerable expense, and in which prizes are gained by the bestowment upon them of certain cures of souls, which are located so that the emoluments they possess are of a larger amount than belong to situations of much greater labour and wider utility—a system that delights in inequalities which disgust all reasonable and thinking men, that tramples upon the proportion between desert and reward that justice ought ever to uphold, and which levels the whole spiritual character of the Church, so as to make it a sordid, grasping, and aspiring profession, in which men may engage as they do in any commercial undertaking. All that Dr. Chalmers alleges himself to have proved he may have proved, and yet nothing whatever be done towards establishing the propriety of a machinery in which ecclesiastical functions are rendered subservient to temporal factions and party interests—by which men are made to depend, for local influence and station as teachers of religion, on the wealth of this or that patron, on the influence of this or that individual, nay, on the success of this or that party in electioneering or party conflicts. All that Dr. Chalmers alleges to be proved may be proved, and yet nothing whatever be done towards showing the propriety of tying up the expression of religious faith and worship in permanent forms—by which intellect is restrained, by which information is suppressed, by which the powers of the soul are imprisoned and confined, so as to obstruct that continual advancement which Providence evidently designed that our intellectual faculties should pursue.

Such a Church, operating as he describes, may exist in Utopia, and may be a beautiful establishment there; but, as a practical question, these are evils which are felt by the great bulk of the population—these are what the champions of such machinery have to advocate, if they can; or, if they

cannot, to confess that the machine so works as to produce enormous evils, whether or not the good be realised which they regard as its great end and aim. We cannot allow abuses such as these—it may be said they are only abuses, and not defects—we cannot allow Episcopalian abuses of this description to skulk in, under shelter of the Presbyterian cloak, in a general argumentation on the propriety of Church establishments. Nor is it unfair to look at the particular religion, so far as it is described by the lecturer himself in this publication, in connection with his theory of establishment. Dr. Chalmers has stumbled, at the threshold of his argument, over his own theology. He belongs to a Church whose creed ascribes every good word and thought in man to supernatural influence; a Church which calls in a specific, divine, miraculous agency for man's conversion and for man's virtue—an agency rendered necessary by the alleged total depravity of his own nature. He says, and says in conformity with the faith of his Church and of the English Church, "It is by the descent of an influence from above that every human spirit is reclaimed from the barrenness, from the deadly blight, of nature, and made to abound in the fruits of righteousness." Well, then, what is the establishment of a Church to do? Does that create a divine influence? Does that supersede a divine influence? Do the operations of a temporal government command a portion of the almighty power? He felt the difficulty, and he has endeavoured to remove it—he has struggled with it in two or three different ways, beginning by speaking not very respectfully of those by whom it is urged—men of his own class in religion, whom he calls men of strong, but unintellectual, piety—who, in the entireness of their dependence upon God, would of themselves do nothing. To show that they are wrong, he appeals to the analogy both of Nature and of Providence. I am quoting now from the second section of his first lecture: "In the business, for example, of agriculture, as well as of seamanship and the arts, do we behold processes of human contrivance adapted to powers, that often, in their principle and mode of operation, are altogether beyond the reach of human comprehension. And certain it is, that the dependence we ought to feel on the Sovereign of our world, for the shower and the sunshine, and the various influences of the firmament

above, does not supersede the diligence wherewith we ply the labours, and both devise and prosecute the schemes, of our well-arranged husbandry below. Here, then, we have a supernal influence in the hands of God, conjoined with a terrestrial economy in the hands of man." He says afterwards: "There is a region in South Africa, where the soil is of the best capabilities; but where, from the utter want of rain all the year, vegetation is nearly unknown, or, at least, no human industry can obtain a recompense by any additions which it can possibly make to the produce of it. Here, then, it is not the presence but the negation of a celestial aliment which suspends all terrestrial labour as hopeless and unavailing; and if, in virtue of some physical change, this aliment were restored, or rain were to fall as in other countries of the globe, then, and then only, could there be a meaning or a justification for the appliances of human activity and skill; and then a busy agriculture, now unlocked, would find room and encouragement for its various processes. And it is even so in the work of spiritual cultivation. For the prosperity of this work we are taught that there must be a descent of living water from the upper sanctuary. Yet this descent does not supersede—it rather calls for—a work of preparation on the earth which receives it."

Now, in the view of divine influence which many of us hold, this analogy may be perfectly sound; but in the view which Dr. Chalmers holds of the Scotch and English Churches, put forth in his argument, the analogy altogether fails in its application. The work of converting a sinner, or the formation of a righteous character, is altogether, they say, supernal. What is there to compare with this in the operations of the agriculturist, or those of the manufacturer, or of the mariner? There the influences are calculated, they are ascertainable. Men take their courses in relation to them in conformity with the dictates of the experience of past years. They know what usually happens in the regular revolution of the seasons; they know in what way the wind may be made available for the passage of a ship across the waters; and having ascertained the laws of material existence, human ingenuity renders those laws subservient to its own purposes. It is idle to speak of the rain which comes down from the clouds, or of the

blowing of the wind, as heavenly, celestial, supernal, supernatural, merely because the clouds are higher than the soil. If there be any thing which deserves the name of supernatural in this combination, it is the power of the human mind. That is the grandest power employed, which, anticipating the descent of rain and the diffusion of sunshine, and knowing the fertility of the soil, avails itself of the combination of all, deposits the seed, and confidently reckons upon the harvest. If there be here any combination of different species of influence, it is the influence of the human mind combined with the influence of the laws which the Creator has stamped upon material being; and whether that material being exist in the air, above the surface of the earth, or below the surface of the earth—whether it be on the land or on the mighty waters—it still comes to the same thing—we have but one result presented to us, the influence of intelligent agency on material combination. To this there is nothing whatever analogous in the supposed supernatural operation in the conversion of a sinner, and it supplies no reason why that should be connected with any apparatus of human means. If this be true doctrine, and I do not say that it is, whether these means be or be not employed, the result would be the same. That result is, according to such a belief, only accomplished by the putting forth of the supernatural power of the Deity. What kings or legislators, people or Churches, may do, can have little concern in the realisation of such consequences. The inevitable tendency of a representation of this kind, as implied in Dr. Chalmers' argument, is to destroy all propriety of interfering in the divine agency. I am not contending against divine influence. I believe that influence to be universally diffused. I believe it to be the principle of all life, of all action, of all the phenomena of the present world, and of all future worlds. But, then, we cannot speak of divine and human power as two separate and coöperating things. When the power of man is put forth, the power of God is in that power—the power of God is manifest to us in whatever agencies exist, in whatever can be traced in the past, in whatever can be anticipated of the future; and it is the destruction of all philosophical, of all theological truth, to take human agency and divine influence into coördinate operation. But the tendency to do

this is so irresistible in Dr. Chalmers' mode of putting the question, that he has actually done in words what I have now predicted as the inevitable consequence of his own mode of reasoning. He says, at the end of the first illustration I read to you, "Here, then, we have a supernal influence in the hands of God, conjoined with a terrestrial economy in the hands of man." He speaks of the Creator and the creature as engaged both of them as active agents in a sort of partnership concern: "It is by the patient working of man, superadded to the inscrutable working of nature, or rather of him who is the Author of nature, that we obtain the sustenance of millions from a territory which, if abandoned to nature alone, would yield but a precarious subsistence for the beasts of the field, and a few straggling savages."

Here, then, we find him fairly stating what cannot but be deemed an opinion subversive of all just views of the attributes, of the omnipresence, of the universal agency of the Deity—we find man erected into an independent power; and a theology which arrogates to itself that of being the most humbling, the most levelling to human pride of any others, actually does what would have startled any philosopher—it creates for humanity a power independent of, and coördinate with, that of the Deity; and parcels out their several operations with the same affectation of precision as would be employed in dictating the mode in which various mechanics are to combine for the production of a common piece of work. There have been times, there were times, according to Lord Byron's *Manfred*, when men walked side by side with spirits on the earth: it was reserved for this argument to put humanity side by side with the Deity in the work of human regeneration. There have been patriots who have marched to victory over the mangled corpses of their comrades: it was reserved for the advocate of establishments to march to his political victory over the mangled body of his own theology.

In one of the portions of this lecture, a contrast of some force is drawn between the reformers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and those of the present day. It is drawn much to the advantage of the former, and I think with great truth. With some comments on this I shall conclude the present lecture. In the eleventh section of the first lecture he says: "And here may we pause on the

instructive contrast between the ecclesiastical reformers of the past and present day. It is on the high walk of theology and sentiment that we meet the former—it having been their aim not to destroy the Established Church, but to animate it with another spirit; or to give it other doctrines and other principles than before. In these times, again, the hands of our reformers are differently employed —taken up chiefly not with the internal, but the external —with what may be termed the economics of the Church, its rights, its revenues, the number and pay of its office-bearers; and were their sole aim a better distribution of its wealth, instead of the abridgment or the alienation of it, this, though a humble, might yet prove an innocent, nay, even a salutary undertaking. The real object of the first reform by Luther and his contemporaries was, to mend the Church's faith. The professed object of the second reform is to mend the Church's framework—though often the obvious effects of the attempted changes, as in Ireland, were to mutilate and weaken, and ultimately to destroy. In former times, it was a high war of intellect and principle, and many of the best heads and noblest hearts of England were engaged in it—when the lore of her profoundest students, and the testimony of her sainted martyrs, and the outraged moral sense of a now awakened community, were all enlisted on the side of scripture, and of a pure scriptural ministration throughout the parishes of the kingdom. Altogether it was a nobler controversy, and maintained on a nobler field than that which now calls forth the championship both of priests and of parliament-men. The struggle then related to the quality of that nourishment which should be given to the souls of the people; and the noble result was, that it should be the pure bread and water of life, taken at once from the repositories and fountain-heads of inspiration, and not adulterated, as before, by the mixtures of a corrupt and superstitious Popery. The struggle now relates, not to the kind or quality of this spiritual nourishment, but rather to the kind of apparatus that should be maintained for the distribution of it. It is a question, not of theology or of morals, but of machinery; and many are the economical and the arithmetical reformers of our age, who feel themselves abundantly qualified for the entertainment of it."

This is true; and it is our complaint against the Church, and the general tendency of establishments, that this is true. It is because the machinery of such institutions tends to produce the lowness and littleness which he has ascribed to modern men, it is because it tends to obliterate the nobler qualities which he ascribes to those of a different period, that we object to such machinery, and that we protest against its influence. True it is, that reform has assumed a comparatively sordid and debasing shape. True it is, that questions connected with religion are now argued in a way that shows the universal predominance of a mere commercial spirit in our country: and why is it? Because the Church has overlaid the intelligence of the country; because it has stifled mind, has suppressed thought, has circumscribed the working of a spirit of free speculation, has fixed its narrow boundaries, has said, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," and has been but too successful in suppressing, and in thus crushing, inquiry. It has sat like an incubus on the spirit of the country, and yet now one of its advocates turns round to upbraid the nation with the absence of all high-mindedness. Look at the constant struggle which has been kept up, since the Church of England was established, with whatever has been more pure, sainted, devoted, elevated in the land. Look at the first conflicts with the Puritans, when that body, whatever their errors might be, endeavoured to infuse something of religious earnestness into daily life. It was by the Establishment that this endeavour was suppressed, and that they were compelled, by hundreds and thousands, to flee their country, and to find refuge in the wildernesses across the wide Atlantic; while those that remained at home were driven to draw the sword of rebellion, and contend upon the tented field for the rights which ought to have been guaranteed by an institution pursuing the course which Dr. Chalmers ascribes to his theoretical Church. And then, when Milton, and others of the political independents of that day, raised their voice in favour of religious liberty, where was the great difficulty against which they had to strive, but in episcopalian power, in the shape of an establishment which refused that very Milton, the pride and glory of his country—turned him back from its own ministry, because he could not "subscribe

slave, and take an oath withal," which he felt would have done violence to his conscience! Look at the exclusion, by the Act of Uniformity, on and before St. Bartholomew's Day, of Baxter and some two thousand of the most devoted men at that time in the Church—men who faced the perils of the plague while it devastated this metropolis, and whose ministrations were most accessible and most acceptable to all classes of the people. They were driven from their livings; they were turned on the wide world; and prohibited from pursuing, in their disinterested and devoted manner, the course which they had marked out for themselves, of winning souls from Satan to Christ and to God. When such men as Locke and Newton rose in the Church—when they kept up a connection between the spirit of rationality and that of devotion—when they blended the agencies of the human mind with the dictates of religion—they found themselves compelled to remain solitary, as it were, in the world. If they did not join themselves with the sectarians that existed, they yet departed far indeed from the faith which the Church had imposed. Their names, often claimed in connection with that Church, as a demonstration of its affinity with science and intelligence, are prominent records of heresy against its prescribed forms and creeds. Many of its ministers have, at various times, made repeated attempts at the introduction of a more enlarged system, of a simpler faith, of a recognition of the scriptures only for signature by ministers when entering on office; but every attempt was crushed by the Church, every sign of intellect was diligently trodden out. There was the constant elevation, above all the dictates of intelligence, of what was becoming only conventional; and when that course has been pursued for three centuries, we are called to join in lamentation over the deficiency of intellectuality and of high-mindedness.

I say the allegation is a just one. There is such a feeling of sordidness—there is such a predominance of the commercial spirit: and why has not the Church checked that spirit? why has it not reformed and purified that spirit? It is the tendency of too many of our institutions to lead to the consideration of every question whatever as a money question. On this ground it is that many of the most important discussions of political right and liberty

have been agitated, and on this ground that they have been decided. The rapacity of party to appropriate the largest share of the nation's revenue has reacted, giving to the character of reform a similar tendency to that element of sordidness, of repelling cupidity, which has served to obliterate principle from the minds of men even in those great conflicts that involve the rights of their nature and the elements of civil liberty. Even literature has been judged of on the same principle. The merit of effusions of the mind has been treated as a much less important subject than their cheapness in the market. Throughout the whole class of topics which interest the people of this country, we find every where the money power elevated in its importance—every where the golden image is that which attracts its crowd of worshipers; and the Church, instead of stopping, and vigorously as in a death-grapple struggling with this, in order to insure the spirituality of men, has thrown its own weight into the scale, has exhibited the sordidness of its own professors, and coöperated with the tendency of commercial speculation to render the whole country one great huxtering nation.

It is true, as Dr. Chalmers says, that the reformers of the present day seem comparatively low-minded when compared with their predecessors. And what is the general influence of all the arrangements considered as a whole—the arrangements in Church and State together—but to elevate mere mediocrity, and to suppress whatever is distinguished by intellectual superiority? It is not in our houses of legislation that we meet with the men whose names most adorn our country and recommend it to the reverence of foreign nations, as they will to that of future ages. It is not in the House of Commons that we find such men as Bentham of the last generation, or Bailey of the present, or many others who might be named. Nay, even the mere chance of hereditary birth seems to produce a higher average talent than the free choice of the people, when that choice is debased by the prevailing low-mindedness of the institutions and teachers that should have led them forward to better things. Action and reaction continue through all classes of society, until, if the tendency of establishments, and especially of religious establishments, be not checked by the natural and opposite tendencies of the human mind, and by

the power which belongs to such agencies as that of the press, we can only expect a progressive degradation.

We trust that, by whatever appeals establishments may be upheld, by whatever sophisms they may be recommended, in the absence of that better demonstration which would be furnished had experience shown them to have generated and displayed the high-mindedness that the lecturer desiderates,—we trust that the antagonistic power will, in time, be found strong enough in the conflict—that gifted minds will feel the force of just principles, and will celebrate their influences with a voice that shall reach the hearts of the millions, and produce a response that shall be irresistible in the reformation of all establishments, secular or ecclesiastical.

CRITICISM ON CHALMERS' DEFENCE OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

No. II.

June 3, 1838.

In resuming the analysis of Dr. Chalmers' defence of National Church Establishments, I must call upon you for a considerable degree of close and patient attention—not that I mean to occupy you at any unusual length, but because, in the mode which I shall pursue, there will be occasion for the use of considerable extracts, in order at once to illustrate his argument and to find the means of its confutation—which will very often consist of passages destructive of his pleading in one particular, while they are advanced by himself in order to promote its strength in some other particular. I shall first state the course of argument which he pursues, show wherein I differ from the conclusions that he deduces, and then analyse in succession the various principles on which his professed demonstration rests.

The argument of Dr. Chalmers for the utility or necessity of National Church Establishments is this: he contends that the principle of free trade, leaving the supply and the demand to adjust themselves without the interference of the government, is inapplicable to religious instruction; because for this there is no previous demand by the non-religious, but, on the other hand, an indifference or even antagonism towards it,—that the voluntary principle, which he divides into two portions, namely, that which comes strictly under the denomination of free trade, and which is, according to his view, merely a contribution for the supply of the contributor's own wants, while in its other form it is analogous to a bounty, the expense being borne by him who seeks to proselyte others,—that this principle, neither in one form nor in the other, is sufficient for

the religious cultivation of the people of a country; but that in the latter form, that of bounty rather than of free trade, it is most efficient, and is the same in principle with a national establishment—that being, as he contends, nothing more than the voluntariness of a community exerting itself for the complete instruction of its members. He thus brings religion into contact with the functions of government, and then his argument goes on—that government can best realise this object, can render this bounty most efficient, by a territorial distribution of the means of teaching, and by the selection of the clergy of some one particular class, sect, or denomination as its agents in this national work. Thus does his argument advance from the first point that he contends for, namely, the inadequacy of the common principle of demand and supply for the promotion of religious and moral teaching, up to the selection, the endowment, the national character of some one sect or denomination.

In speaking both of the conclusion at which he arrives, and of the means by which he arrives at it, it is by no means my purpose, whatever grounds others may take, to contend that government has no concern whatever with the spiritual culture of a population. I think that it has. I think that a nation should not be left to itself as to the means of intellectual and moral training. I believe national education to be one of the most important and obligatory concerns on which a government can exercise its powers. I think that universal education, and that of a high order, should in all cases, if possible, be provided for by that authority which represents the collective people. I think the state has a right to demand that its members shall not grow up uninstructed for the fulfilment of their functions as citizens, unprepared to receive the good and to do the good which belongs to them in that character; and, as it does not recognise ignorance in the subject as an excuse for error, it should not either recognise or tolerate incompetence in teachers. I hold that the reception of instruction is a universal right that should be enjoyed, and its communication a universal obligation which should be fulfilled and enforced. And I think, also, that government may usefully go beyond this point, may go a considerable degree beyond it; I see no reason why religion, in the

proper sense of the word—I do not say precisely in Dr. Chalmers' sense—but I see not why religion, in the proper sense of the word, should be excluded, nor how it can be excluded, from education. Religion is the result of science well understood or imparted, of history wisely narrated, of morality systematically and scientifically unfolded. Religion is that generality of principle, that simple view of laws regulating physical nature, and mental and moral nature, which God has implanted; and which, so far as we are acquainted with it, constitutes the sum of our knowledge of God. Nor do I see why government, especially where there are funds at its disposal—funds originally emanating from individual beneficence, but subject, from the nature and reason of the case, to the control of the community from time to time—why these should not be applied in ways which are generally advantageous, always bearing in mind that the advantage of the whole and not of a part is that which it is the business of a community or legislature to contemplate in the appropriation of such funds. I see not why, where these exist without levying taxation, they should not be applied to building, throughout the country, temples, rooms, churches—call them what you will—places where all classes and sects and denominations may, if they will, under regulations that would preserve order and propriety, practise their several forms of worship, if they cannot combine in some one simple form—where lectures and other modes of instruction may be carried on—where both young and adults may be taught—where, in short, every thing may be practised which is conducive to the unfolding of man's intellectual and moral powers. In this way, great good to all, with detriment to none, may be diffused over the whole face of the country.

Where my view separates from that of Dr. Chalmers, is at this particular point. Against the selection of a particular theology, against the endowment of a particular priesthood, against any thing like a bounty or bonus for some one mode of thought or belief, I should enter a decided protest, because it must involve an interference with individual liberty which does not belong to the functions of government, which does not consist with the universal rights of the community, which does not tend to the

mental and moral, any more than to the political, advantage of society.

The first argument rested upon by Dr. Chalmers is, that the principle of free trade is inapplicable to matters of mental and moral instruction—to what he calls religion—because there is no antecedent demand in this case; and here I think he shows a view of human nature which is totally inconsistent with facts, and inconsistent with his own admissions. I shall state the argument in his own language, as you will find it in the fifth section of the second lecture. After showing that physical wants are felt by the most ignorant, and produce a craving for their supply which stimulates production, he goes on to say: "Now, the very reverse of all this holds of Christianity, or rather of Christian instruction, viewed as an article which is beneficial to man, and which should therefore be distributed, to all the extent that is good or desirable to mankind, throughout the mass of society. It is not with man's intellectual or his moral as it is with his animal nature. Although it be true that the longer he has been without food, the more hungry he is, or the greater and more urgent is his desire of food, yet the more ignorant a man is, not the greater, but, generally speaking, the less is his desire of knowledge; and this converse proposition is still more manifestly true of his moral than of his intellectual wants. The more immersed a man is in vice or in voluptuousness, not most certainly the greater, but beyond all doubt the less, is his desire of virtue or his desire of holiness. There is no natural hungering or thirsting after righteousness, and before man will seek that the want should be supplied, the appetite must first be created. The less a man has, whether of religion or righteousness, the less does he care for them, and the less will he seek after them. It is thus that nature does not go forth in quest of Christianity—but Christianity must go forth in quest of nature. It is, on the one hand, the strength of the physical appetency, and, on the other hand, the languor of the spiritual, the moral, or the intellectual appetency, which makes all the difference."

Now, from the argument thus broadly stated, there are most material deductions to be made. Man is not naturally so indifferent to, so averse from, religion, as this representation implies. If he be, how is it that man

in all countries and in all ages has been sure to have a religion? How is it that no traveller in his wanderings, no historian in his records, no antiquarian in his researches, has yet made us acquainted with societies, with nations, with tribes that have existed long in the world without any form of religion whatever? Civilised or savage, ancient or modern, communities of men have ever had their religions, though they might be gross superstitions; and often the very grossness of the superstition has only shown that man must have something of the kind for the supply of some want in his nature, or for the gratification of some tendency in his being. The founders of states, the great legislators of antiquity, generally blended religion with their institutions; they often took advantage of the credulity of the people to a very large and atrocious extent,—but still the very credulity of which they took advantage showed that there was no natural antagonism to the notion of religion; and, very often, the first onset of a voluntary system, the first expression of more rational views by certain individuals, led to compulsion in their institutions, and, by reaction, to the overthrow of a less rational belief, and to some progress towards the combination of reason with the faith generally entertained. The language of all history, the concurrent voice of all countries and ages, proclaims man to be a religious being; and he shows this even on those occasions when, for a while, the state of society seems to correspond with what Dr. Chalmers' argument takes for granted to be the natural condition of humanity. The strongest revulsion against religion in any form, against even the very name of religion, of which we can find any instance in history, was that of the French Revolution, when for a while, after the altar had been overthrown together with the throne, there seemed an almost frantic desire to gratify feelings of hostility by treading in the dust, and in every way pouring disgrace upon, whatever represented the religion that had been the established one of the country. But, then, how long and how outrageously had this reaction been provoked—how completely had the Papal Church in France exposed its own falsehood and hollowness—how thoroughly had the conduct of its priests, and the upholding of its superstitions, when they had been exposed to universal ridicule, disgusted the nation, and driven them, as it were, to any thing which

could gratify emotions thus excited, even although it was such as at any other period would have been intolerable, and drawn down the indignant stream of popular reprobation! How prompt was the revulsion! Even the fiercest revolutionary multitudes, the most ignorant, unscrupulous, and sanguinary revolutionary chieftains, even they became disgusted with this feeling—sought to check it; a very short period indeed elapsed before they endeavoured to give another turn to the public expression of emotion; and by rapid degrees the religion which had been destroyed was nominally reëstablished in the very same form; and from that time to this the mind of France, in its various manifestations, whatever freedom of speech may be there allowed which opinion does not tolerate here,—whatever boldness of doubt and of denial may there be familiar to the public, yet which is here only reserved for the privacy of confidential communication,—yet, notwithstanding this, the mind of France has shown itself earnestly groping and feeling after some form of religion. We find demonstrations of this tendency in its gravest and in its lightest productions. We see them in its works of fiction, as well as in its systems of philosophy. There is what the apostle describes in his speech to the Athenians—"a feeling after God, if haply they may find him." And in this feeling there is, probably, not less of real religion than there is in those who assume the infallibility of their own creeds,—who sit in supercilious judgment on those who differ from them,—who discuss nothing, who doubt of nothing,—and whose faith is only confirmed by the reiteration of, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we!"

Or, as a specimen of the tendency of human nature, and of the free working of men's wants and desires in matters of religion, look to America, where the commercial spirit has attained a yet higher predominance than even in this country. Now, what is the condition of America, where the principle of free trade, represented by Dr. Chalmers as so wholly inefficient, has had a wider scope than in any other region? My answer is from the introduction of Miss Martineau's chapter on the "Administration of Religions," in her work on *Society in America:*

"The eagerness for religious instruction and the means of social worship are so great, that funds and buildings are

provided wherever society exists. Though the clergy bear a larger proportion to men of other occupations, I believe, than is the case any where, except, perhaps, in the Peninsula, they are too few for the religious wants of the people. Men are wanting; but churches and funds are sufficient. According to a general summary of religious denominations,* made in 1835, the number of churches or congregations was 15,477; the population being, exclusive of the slaves, between fifteen and sixteen millions; and a not inconsiderable number being settlers scattered in places too remote for the formation of regular societies, with settled ministers. To these 15,477 churches, there were only 12,130 ministers. If to these settled clergy there are added the licentiates and candidates of the Presbyterian Church, the local preachers of the Methodists, the theological students, and Quaker administrators, it will be acknowledged that the number of religious teachers bears an unusually large proportion to the population. Yet the Baptist sect alone proclaims a want of above three thousand ministers to supply the existing churches. Every exertion is made to meet the religious wants of the people. The American Education Society has assisted largely in sending forth young ministers; the Mission and Bible Societies exhibit large results. In short, society in the United States offers every conceivable testimony that the religious instincts of the people may be trusted to supply their religious wants. It is only within four or five years that this has been fully admitted, even in the State of Massachusetts. Up to 1834 every citizen of that state was obliged to contribute something to the support of some sect or church. The inconsistency of this obligation with true democratic principle was then fully perceived, and religion left wholly to voluntary support. It is needless to say that the event has fully justified the confidence of those who have faith enough in Christianity to see that it needs no protection from the State, but will commend itself to human hearts better without."

* "This summary does not pretend to be complete, but it is the nearest approximation to fact that can be obtained. According to it, the Episcopalian Methodists are the most numerous sect: then the Catholics, Calvinistic Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Christians, Episcopalians, and Quakers. The other denominations follow, down to the Tunkers and Shakers, which are the smallest."

Now, here we have not the necessity of forcing a supply without a demand; but we have the demand outrunning the supply. More churches are built than teachers can be found to occupy, more funds are provided than can be expended. There is the very reverse of what takes place in this and other countries under the influence of establishments. The difficulty is not in finding funds and churches, but in finding teachers. Under establishments, the difficulty is the reverse. The number of candidates for tickets in the great lottery of an establishment always makes a surplus clerical population. It is so here. We have many more clergymen than livings; and many of those who have livings already only hold them as a means of attaining to higher dignity and greater emolument. It is the artificial agency of establishments that makes the supply exceed the demand; and it does not create the demand that should render the supply welcome: while in the state in which America exists, we find that the want is only of men—of pure-minded men, content with competency, without wealth or political dignity—who will devote themselves to the work to which, by the population, they are thus expressly invited.

But it is not in the average state of the human mind as it has been heretofore nurtured or neglected; it is not in the state of the human mind as it has been developed or depressed by the agency of despotic and erring governments; it is not to the condition of the human mind as it exists under the revulsion of revolution, or in combination with the most intense forms of commercial spirit; it is not to the human mind as it exists where establishments, with their accumulated abuses, have, through long ages, perverted and misdirected the agencies of common intelligence,—that we should look for the solution of this question. It is to mind, as it is in the power of governments, when they do their duty, in the establishment of national education, to develop it. We should ask, What will be the tendency? We should ask, What will be the proportion of supply and demand when the entire population is gifted with that instruction to provide which is the first duty of an enlightened legislation? Were this realised, I think that there could be little doubt that whatever theology commended itself to common sense and common feeling

would soon find that there was a demand calling forth as much supply as could be desired; and that religion would then appear, according to the views and conceptions of individual minds so trained, amongst the deepest wants of our nature, and due provision for it amongst its most earnest cravings. If Dr. Chalmers should still contend that this would not be the case, why, we can only ascribe the result to the peculiar character of his own theology. If he says that human nature would, under any circumstances, recoil from receiving his Christianity—if he says that man, intelligently trained, as wise legislation has the power of training him, would, in the exercise of his strength of reason, reject his creed—why, is not this a concession that that creed has dogmas so hard, and rules with such a yoke of iron, that it is in man's nature to rebel against it,—that, combining as it may mysteries at which reason stands aghast, and faith itself is half confounded,—that, interfering as it does with the dictates of that true morality which is the agency of dignity and of happiness,—that, interfering as it does with the common and strong feelings of the universal human heart,—it is in itself something which cannot be forced upon mankind, and in behalf of which it requires no small power of countenance or strength of nerve to go to government and say, "I pray you to impose my religion upon humanity; because my religion is such that humanity, left to itself, will only turn from it with abhorrence."

Dr. Chalmers allows, however, that there is something more than the common commercial principle of free trade involved in religion. He says, and says justly, that even in commercial matters a market is sometimes created by the vendor, instead of the article being sought for originally by the purchaser. "It is even thus that commerce sometimes obtains a footing for itself in particular countries. Before the natives can have a liking for certain of its articles, they must first have a sight and a trial of them; and so instances can be given where dealers have adventured their goods into places where, instead of finding a market, they had first to form one—at their own hazard, therefore, or even expense, in the first instance, and not at the expense of customers. But though it was thus at the commencement of the trade, it could not possibly be thus that we can explain the continuance of the

trade. The same people who would not send for the commodity at the first, might, when once made to know and to relish it, rather than want, be abundantly willing to pay for it afterwards."

Now, this happens, perhaps, more frequently in commercial undertakings than the language here used would lead us to suppose. In mental productions—in any advance in what relates to knowledge, to imagination, to genius, to morals —it happens yet more, and perhaps the exception often becomes the rule. There is no previous demand for any of the great works of human intelligence. There was no previous market created for, no craving for a supply of, the epics of Homer, the tragedies of Shakespeare, or the novels of Scott. These and similar works created a desire—formed an appreciation of their own beauty and grandeur. They made a market—they made a demand. The origination was in the power of the individual mind, and that power put forth was the cause, and not the result, of a disposition in others to recognise such greatness, and to enjoy the mental feast thus provided.

And so with the invention of the press. The printing of books, by which thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions are continually supplied with the literature they may desire, was not in itself the result of a previous demand. Those tens of thousands and millions were going on contentedly in their several courses of life, with no appreciation of, no craving after, books which could not reach them. It was the diffusive power of the press itself that made its own market, and created its own demand. And so has it been with the occupation of the press in rendering literature more cheap, and in providing for a far more extensive dissemination. Cheap literature —the Penny Magazines, or, in politics, the cheap newspapers—were not the result of a previous craving—they were not called for—they were not demanded by the thousands and millions who said, "Give us these cheap exhibitions of facts or of arguments." Some minds more daring and adventurous than others made experiment after experiment, until the very effort in which they embarked created its own demand, and realised that distribution which, had they only waited for a previous craving, could not now, nor ever, have been accomplished.

Now, there is in religion a principle analogous to this. What Dr. Chalmers calls a bounty—what he describes as extra-voluntaryism—that which leads a man not only to pay his own minister, but to pay a man to be the minister or missionary of others,—this is essentially a portion of almost all religions; at any rate, it eminently belongs to the Christian religion, which, from its first promulgation to the present time, has been characterised by the zeal of its votaries. They have desired to win others over,—there has been a stimulus, perhaps, in the very tenets they believed, to induce them to make others believe them; and, in the very forms which they practise, to induce them to labour to have those forms practised by others, and so to carry on the work of dissemination. It was not by a previous demand, but by this internally expansive power, that the Christian religion first established itself; and the particulars of the mode in which it did so are detailed by Dr. Chalmers for another purpose, when he labours to show that the principle of supply and demand did not apply to the introduction of Christianity. I quote the passage in which he does this, to show that there is in Christianity, according to his own concession and statement of facts, a diffusive power which, if it be left to itself, will insure its progressive extension in the world. He says: "Now let us consider whether this is the footing on which the world ever is or ever can be supplied with its Christianity, or rather with its Christian instruction, in the way that is best for the moral interests of our species. It was not so at the first introduction of Christianity, in virtue, not of a movement from earth to heaven, but of a movement from heaven to earth; and the expenses of which, throughout the infancy and boyhood of the Saviour, were certainly not defrayed by those for whose welfare the mission was undertaken. It was not so during the time of his public ministry, when three or four women ministered to him of their substance, as he travelled from place to place over the land of Judæa; and so he was maintained at the cost of the few for the benefit of the many. It was not so in the journeyings of his disciples, two by two, among their countrymen—who, when they entered a city, fixed their residence in some particular house, and were supported by the hospitality of one individual for the good of the general

population. It was not so when the apostles went forth after the resurrection, and received their maintenance from such as Simon the tanner, or Lydia the seller of purple, or Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, and others of those scripture worthies who harboured and entertained the men of God, while they held out the bread of life, without money and without price, to the multitude at large. It was not so when the last, but not the least, of the apostles provided with his own hand for his own necessities; and the wages of Paul the tent-maker enabled Paul the apostle to labour in his sacred vocation without wages. It was not so when he received from other and distinct churches, that, in the church of Corinth, the gospel might not be chargeable to any; and he would suffer no man to strip him of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. And, to come down from the age of the New Testament, it generally could not have been so that the extension of Christianity was carried forward during the first three centuries. The men who were not yet Christians did not, in those days, send to the Apostolic College for men who might give them the lessons of the gospel; but, by a reverse process, teachers went forth among the yet benighted countries of the earth; and their expenses, at least in the first instance, behoved to be borne, not in the shape of a price by those who received the benefit, but in the shape of a bounty by those who dispensed it. In all these instances, contrary to every law or character of pure trade, the expense was borne either totally or partially by one party, and that for the good of another party. It was not as in the ordinary exchanges of commerce. The receivers were not the purchasers; and what they did receive was not a thing by them bought, but a thing to them given. It is an utter misconception that when Constantine set up in his dominions a national establishment of Christianity, he made the first infringement on that system of free trade by which the prosperity of this religion had been heretofore upholden; for, from its very outset, Christianity stood indebted, for almost every footstep of its progress, to a system and a policy directly the opposite of this. When he came forth with his great imperial bounty or benefaction, he only did on the large scale what thousands of benefactors had previously, and for hundreds of years, done on a small

scale before him. When he became the friend and nursing-father of the Church, he did for the whole territory of which he was the sovereign what, times and ways without number, the friends of the Church had already done, each for the little district in which he himself resided, or for the introduction and the maintenance of Christian worship in some chosen locality of his own. With his great national endowment, he but followed in the track of those private and particular endowments which, sometimes temporary and sometimes perpetual, had multiplied beyond all reckoning during the preceding ages of Christianity, and in virtue of which it was that churches innumerable were raised, and congregations were formed, but chiefly in the large and flourishing cities of the Roman empire." Dr. Chalmers passes over as a trifling difference the fact that they gave their own money, whilst Constantine gave the funds of the empire. He proceeds: "The introduction of Christianity into any new land proceeds by a very different method from the introduction thereinto of any of the goods of ordinary merchandise. The commercial adventurers look, for the remuneration of their expenses, to the price or equivalent given by the natives themselves. The missionary adventurers are upheld in their expenses, not by a price, but generally in whole, and almost always in part, by a bounty—the bounty of those who employ and send them forth in full equipment for their high enterprise of charity."

Now, this bounty, this bearing of the cost of the dissemination of religion by those who have already received it, ought, I think, to be regarded as in harmony with free trade, rather than as in opposition to that principle, because, as I have been showing, it belongs to religion; it is, in fact, part of a man's payment to his own religion; it is the supply of his own wants; he pays his own minister that his minister may be a missionary; it is part of the craving of his own mind, not only that he himself should have instruction and the opportunity of worship, but it is equally a portion of the craving of his own mind that others should have the opportunity of similar worship and of similar instruction: and so long as the desire of proselytism, so long as anxiety for dissemination, forms any portion of a man's own personal religion,—so long do his contribu-

tions towards that object appear in perfect harmony with the voluntary system, with the principle of free trade. It is his own gratification that he seeks in this bounty; it is for the satisfaction of his own mind that he pays the minister or missionary, who is to cross the ocean, and preach his creed either on the burning sands of Africa or amid the nations of the most frozen regions of the North. Supply and demand do not relate, therefore, to those who are the hearers of the missionary. The principle of supply and demand has its operation with the individual whose soul cannot be satisfied, whose feelings cannot have ease, whose gratification cannot be complete, unless he send out this agent to the remotest regions of the inhabited world.

When Dr. Chalmers turns to other portions of his argument—when he comes from the negative to the positive, and, instead of disproving the power of the free-trade principle or voluntary system, aims at showing the power of an establishment—he then seems to imbibe a different notion of human nature—he then entertains a different view of that which is inherent in the very essence of modern theology, and which has generally been a feature of Christian theology; he then finds that human beings are really not so very incorrigible, but that they are accessible to kindness—that their hearts may be reached—that, in fact, it requires little effort indeed to stimulate a voluntary demand for religious worship and religious instruction. He asks the question—a very proper question—Where lies the charm or efficacy of that territorial system on which we reckon for so stupendous a fulfilment? and, in endeavouring to answer this inquiry, he appeals to experience, constant and unexcepted experience, which it is in the power of any one to verify at pleasure, and which justifies, he says, the welcome and cordiality: "Our first experience, then, which we quote with the greater confidence that it is so general,—we had almost said constant and unexcepted,—and which it is in the power of any one to verify at pleasure, is the welcome and cordiality on the part of the householders wherewith these visits of a Christian minister are received. This is the actual finding among all who make the attempt; and surely, after it has become their finding, it should no longer be stigmatised as our fancy.

Whether in town or country it makes no difference. There is an open door of admittance every where; and this forms a very great encouragement to at least the initial footsteps of our enterprise." That very nature which, in his early argument, he has been obliged to represent as so averse from religion that no voluntary system, no combination of spontaneous associations, can ever have power to penetrate its mind or to reach its heart, needs nothing but the application of missionary zeal, for which there is a latent demand. And how does our apologist provide for supplying that demand? Where are his missionaries to come from? Where is zeal and power to be found like that which he himself has already described as exercising its energies in the first three centuries of Christianity? Why, he finds these in the agents of an establishment — in the ministers, in the clergy, of a Church which government shall have rendered complete in its territorial distribution. And when have establishments formed missionaries? When have they shown themselves to be the machinery which generates or which gives free scope to such a power as, according to his own account, was originally put forth by Christianity? He felt the difficulty, although he has not grappled with it. He says: "It is true that, though we can create the right machinery, we cannot create the right men; and that without these the machinery may either be ill-worked or not worked at all—and so be the instrument of evil instead of good. This may be admitted, without, at the same time, destroying the importance, the vast importance, of the proposition—that there *is* a certain machinery, a certain system of moral and spiritual tactics, by which the Christian worth of one man might be made tenfold more available for the Christianisation of two thousand people than we ever find it under a random economy." What avails this, if the machinery of an establishment be uniformly such as to keep down such a spirit, and create the very opposite? "The difficulty," he continues, "we are quite sensible, lies in our want of men; but why not make them effective, as far as we have them, as far as they will go? why not provide them with the greatest possible facilities for the greatest possible result? and, could we only make good a few specimens of the power and the fruitfulness that lie in this territorial cultivation,

would it not, along with the demonstration given by them to the worth of an Establishment, give a mighty impulse and direction towards a pure and well-principled exercise of the ecclesiastical patronage?"

Now, the kind of impulse which is thus given towards a missionary spirit, has been described by a fellow-churchman of Dr. Chalmers—by Dr. Cook, in his *History of Christianity*. Dr. Chalmers, in the passage I have just read, has spoken of Constantine the Great as only doing that on a large scale which individual Christians have done before on a small one. He did that for the whole Roman empire which they had done for some particular localities —he gave a great additional sphere of usefulness to missionary spirit, to religious bounty, which the zeal of Christians had provided for the dissemination of their religion. Dr. Cook, in tracing the progress of Christianity, has described the strange effect of the establishment by Constantine on the missionary spirit of the Church:

"The Church, after it had been firmly established, and had, amidst the riches and honours with which it was endowed, forgotten that it should not have been of this world, conceived it incumbent, as an evidence of its zeal, or, as was too often the case, for extending its power and its influence, to make attempts to substitute the cross of Christ for the emblems of paganism. In accomplishing this object, it employed different means. At one time it stimulated the sovereigns, who had resigned themselves to its insidious direction, to use fire and sword for driving those against whom they were directed within its pale, representing such holy warfare, as it was impiously denominated, as the unequivocal evidence that they who were engaged in it were guided by the spirit of God; and rewarding the massacres which it calmly contemplated, by promising to those who perpetrated them the divine favour in this world, and eternal happiness in the next. It was thus often successful. The churches which were built it saw frequented by the wretched remains of the people who escaped its vengeance; but with what feelings they repaired to them it was not solicitous to know, for even its ministers, who had recourse to such measures, could not perhaps have so far eradicated all that is kind and humane in our nature, and could not have been so thoroughly ignorant of the religion

which they propagated, as not to suspect that there could be little sincere love for what was associated with the misery or the destruction of whatever had been contemplated with delight, or to believe that for such labour in his vineyard, they could expect the blessing of him who invited men to come to him that they might find peace and rest to their souls.

"When recourse could not be had to this mode of conversion, the Church despatched emissaries to labour amongst darkened nations, to announce to them the truth of the gospel, and to incline them to receive bishops and pastors who would permanently direct them. Of these, it cannot be doubted that some were actuated by the truly benevolent spirit which had guided the first teachers of the faith; and that they eagerly strove to accomplish what they trusted would add to the happiness of those to whom they were sent. But even such men did little more than obtain a nominal acquiescence in Christianity; they, in truth, did not conceive it of moment that any thing beyond this should be yielded; for the purity of religion was, as we shall find, by this time destroyed, and it was chiefly regarded as intended to add to the splendour and the consequence of the persons by whom it was inculcated. If, therefore, they could report that there was the semblance of conversion, they were satisfied, and congratulated themselves in having effectually done what the primitive martyrs had gladly submitted to death that they might achieve.

"The far greater part, however, of those who were employed in extending Christianity, had no claim to the sincerity and good intention of their more innocent brethren, for they were seeking, avowedly, their own aggrandisement; and they preached what they represented as the religion of Christ, because they knew that if it were adopted they would be honoured by the distinguished offices of the hierarchy, which would immediately follow its introduction. Hence, they shrunk from no means by which their ambition could be gratified. When they found those whom they instructed unwilling to relinquish the religion of their fathers, they endeavoured to convince them that there was in it nothing repugnant to what they wished them to embrace; and, satisfied with deluding them into a profession of Christianity, they permitted all their superstitious prac-

tices, however corrupting the morals and debasing the character, to remain in full force.

"When even in this way they failed in making an impression, taking advantage of the ignorance and credulity of those whom they exhorted, they dazzled and confounded them by false miracles, which at once convinced the multitude that their teachers were under the guidance of Heaven, and filled them with alarm that, if they did not piously receive their instructions, the Deity would turn against them that awful power which they could not resist.

"But they also addressed themselves with peculiar earnestness to the distinguished females in the different countries which they visited, availing themselves of those amiable and pious feelings which, in the gentler sex, can more easily be excited, and of that tendency to mysticism and enthusiasm which, from this cause, they have in all ages displayed. The fact, accordingly, is, that many nations were, through the influence thus called into action, brought to the faith of Christianity; sovereigns, who would have listened with indifference or with contempt to any appeal which the missionaries could have made to themselves, were affected when their tenets were enforced by the persevering gentleness of those whom they loved; they yielded to wishes which they had not been accustomed to thwart, and, setting an example in their own case, they issued edicts by which their subjects were required, in obedience to the supreme authority, at once to change their sentiments, or rather to assume the name of the author of Christianity. We have already incidentally alluded to instances of this nature, and it is unnecessary minutely to specify them; they are to be found recorded in the history of almost every European nation.

"But, although the conversions which took place, from the establishment of Christianity till the restoration of learning, or the reformation, which forms a new era in the dissemination of the gospel, were unfortunately very far from planting the word of life in the hearts of those to whom it was conveyed, they were very extensive. They reached to almost every country in Europe,—to Arabia, China, Judæa, and many other parts of Asia; and the obscure tribes, to whom no missionaries were despatched, gradually conformed to the religion of those more powerful

states upon which they depended, or to which they looked with respect or veneration. This ultimately proved of great advantage to the cause of Christianity, because it laid the foundation for those juster representations of it which, after the light of knowledge shone upon the world, were through the study of scripture discovered. However little there was in common between the depraved superstitions which had taken shelter under the faith of Christ, and the pure and holy doctrine which he taught, they agreed in name; none of the prejudices which must be subdued before a new religion can be introduced had to be encountered when these superstitions were reformed; and therefore, wherever they had been permitted to remain, they preserved a field which in after ages was successfully cultivated."

Such was the first result of a temporal establishment on the missionary spirit of Christianity: and were we to trace the whole history of religious zeal, of that voluntary bounty which Dr. Chalmers represents as the same principle with establishments, through the following ages, we should find the same results. We should mark the atrocities perpetrated when the Americas were first discovered —the kind of conversion, by the most cruel tortures, practised by the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru. We should have to pass before us the disingenuousness, the various deceptions and contrivances, the priestly power and assumption, the degrading influence over the mind, manners, and morals, obtained by the followers of Ignatius Loyola. We should have, as to Protestant establishments, to see, in our own country, the poor utterly abandoned, until Wesley and Whitfield arose in their own individual and burning zeal to do that which could not be accomplished by the dull spirit of the established clergy. We should find that clergy struggling in hostility against the direct and indirect efforts since made, in antagonism to Missionary Societies, in antagonism to Bible Societies not originating with itself, in antagonism to schools, in a state of hostility towards whatever can advance real religion in man's intellect or feelings.

As a specimen of what Dr. Chalmers' territorial arrangement can do when backed by the power of the government, we will only take the account of what has

actually been done by it in Ireland. There it has been tried for centuries. There its failure is so enormous that he has to make out a case of excuse for it; and in making out that excuse, he shows the action of establishments upon the missionary spirit of Christianity. I quote from the tenth section of his fourth lecture. "When," he says, "considering the movement by the state in the days of Constantine, we made a reference to the clergy; and then observed that, without the forfeiture of principle, but rather in compliance with the dictates both of the most sound principle and of the soundest and most upright policy, they could accept of a national provision, and undertake in return for the Christian education of the people." Such principle and policy as produced the results I have just been reading from Dr. Cook's work. "And in like manner would we speak of the part which belongs to the clergy of the Protestant Establishment in Ireland. They virtually did undertake the Christian education of the families in their respective parishes." That is, they were precisely in the position in which his plea would place a clergy in order that that clergy might thoroughly Christianise a land. "It cannot be disguised that, with many illustrious and honourable exceptions, the clergy as a body have not, during the whole of the last century, done what they might, or done what they ought, for the cultivation of the vineyard made over by the State to their care; and which, in return for their maintenance, they should, by this time, have put into right order, and now been keeping in order. But we must not lose sight of the goodness of a machine in the badness of the working of it." Why, I apprehend it is the very badness of the machine that has produced this pernicious working. "We must see where the failure lies—not in the magnitude of those revenues, which the wayward politicians of our day are now labouring so hard to reduce, if not to annihilate—not in the number of those Protestant labourers, whom, with a strange inversion of all sound policy, they are now doing their uttermost to diminish—not in things pertaining to the framework of the Establishment, wherewith they are now tampering by all sorts of paltry economical reform. The whole evil, in the great bulk and essence of it, has been, that the Church in former times was carelessly and corruptly

patronised." Patronage itself being part of this boasted machinery. "The Church itself, viewed as a machine, is well fitted for its work, provided only that it be well supplied with good and able workmen." Of which, by his own confession, it has been for nearly a century destitute. "Had this Establishment been what it ought to have been—a great home mission, with its ministers acting the part of devoted missionaries—we should by this time of day have been rid of all our embarrassments. There would have been no Catholic question to perplex—and that because there migh have been few or no Catholics. But matters there have no been so ordered. We need not speak of their pluralities, and their sinecures, and of all the evils of their clerical absenteeism. These are the more patent corruptions of the Protestant hierarchy in Ireland, and perhaps the only ones that strike the public observation. But over and above this, there was a mistaken policy, maintained and avowed even by their best clergymen, in the form of an honest though still of a grievously mistaken principle—as if they went beyond their legitimate province if they at all meddled with the Catholic population." The doctor forgetting that the establishment has always, in order to guard itself against dissenting invasion, had recourse to the principle of an hereditary religion, and to depressing the right of individual inquiry and individual choice. "We now inherit the consequences of the misgovernment and the profligacy of former generations. They may be traced to the want of principle and public virtue in the men of a bygone age. Those reckless statesmen who made the patronage of the Irish Church a mere instrument of subservience to the low game of politics—those regardless clergymen who held the parishes as sinecures, and lived in lordly indifference to the state and interests of the people—these are the parties who, even after making full allowance for the share which belongs to the demagogues and agitators of the day, are still the most deeply responsible for the miseries and the crimes of that unhappy land." Here, then, is the result upon missionary zeal of an establishment; and Dr. Chalmers' hope and argument is that, some day, statesmen will not nominate to bishopries from political motives—that patrons will not find in the livings they possess an inheritance for the younger branches of their families, or for the tutors of their

children, without any regard for their clerical qualifications —that individuals who "subscribe slave, and take an oath of submission withal" to a creed which they bind themselves never to question, will not have their zeal or moral feelings altered, fettered, chilled, or damped by this operation—that the existence of the Church of a minority of persons, in spite of the overpowering majority of a nation, will not excite such feelings of hostility and antagonism as must restrict the spread of the religion of that minority; but that somehow or other, if the government will but lay out the country into parishes, and will but pay a priest for every parish, there will be more disinterestedness in practical men, and less partisanship in those who are holding their posts by the predominance of their party—that there will be a self-sacrificing spirit on the part of those who reckon livings as among their patrimonial inheritance, enjoyed by their forefathers, and to be transmitted to their children—and that those whose course of mental faith is marked out for them, will yet somehow have more energy and zeal, and act as intellectual and moral freemen, instead of slaves—and that all these strange collisions and disgusting exhibitions, instead of promoting hostilities and feuds, will somehow or other give way to Christian and brotherly peace, unity, and love,—and all for the sake of showing how much in the dark the world has hitherto been in not perceiving the good of nationally established religions;—expectations which seem to belong to the mystical prediction of the old proverb, that "when the sky falls, we shall catch larks."

CRITICISM ON CHALMERS' DEFENCE OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

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The last point in our analysis of Dr. Chalmers' argument for National Establishments, or, as it should rather have been expressed, for sectarian establishments, to which I adverted, was the incongruous and unwarranted supposition that the clergy of an establishment would be generally animated by a missionary spirit. On this supposition, gratuitous as it is, his argument mainly depends. Unless such should be the case, vain are all the expectations, illusory are the beautiful descriptions, which he gives of the influence of such an establishment in Christianising the entire population. Vain, without this, are all the particulars of his territorial distribution of a country; worth just as much as the lines by which they are drawn upon the map. Not to the purpose, without this, are his lamentations over the number of people who are living without any sense of religion whatever. The power which fails to reach them now would fail to reach them under any other arrangement, unless a missionary spirit could be generated. Vain, without this, is the governmental agency which he invokes, and to which he appeals; for all the power which a government can put forth has already been tried on this subject, and tried to no purpose, for the very reason that the establishments they found do not generate a missionary spirit in the clergy; nay, they have always been found hostile to this spirit: they have not originated, they have not recognised it when it did arise—they have generally struggled to limit, to pervert, or to suppress it altogether—and whenever they have entered into any of the schemes which are suggested, it has been after public opinion by its decision, or

obvious utility by its constraining force, has laid them under the necessity of so doing.

It is nothing to say that there are hundreds of thousands, there are millions, who are not provided for by the present resources of established churches: there is more provision already than the people have recourse to. It is absurd to apply to the legislature for the erection of new churches, because those which exist cannot accommodate the entire population, when the accommodation they do provide is to so large an extent unoccupied. It is not that the multitudes who are without cannot find places if they desire it: it is because there is not adequate attraction for them, and their minds are not in a state for those means to operate upon them which alone can be employed by such institutions. The missionary spirit in religion arose, in this country, with John Wesley, and it arose with him while in the bosom of the Church itself, and with no desire to sever his connection with the Church; but he was obliged to do so to a certain extent, as shown in his lifetime, and by his followers more completely afterwards, for the very reason that he and his followers were animated by that missionary spirit. And whence has arisen in the world any thing analogous to the territorial scheme for acting on those who are regardless of public worship? Whence has arisen the establishment of a ministry for the neglected population, whether of rural districts or cities? It has not been found in Church establishments. It came from America, destitute of such institutions. It was in Boston that such a ministry was established first, and it was there found necessary for the ministry to combine in their operations, and distribute themselves locally over the city in which they dwelt, according to the practice of their Master, in order to seek and to save that which was lost; and only by the reflection of the utility of the plan has it obtained feeble footing in this country.

Here, then, is one great distinction between the two things which Dr. Chalmers aims at identifying. He speaks of what he calls "voluntaryism *ab extra*"—the zeal which impels a man not only to pay a minister, but a missionary, and leads him to employ, at his own expense, the means of sending his form of religion home to the hearts of others,—Dr. Chalmers, I say, attempts to identify this with the

acts of a national legislature or of a government. The very existence of the missionary spirit in such operations—the very presence of that zeal which leads a man, who has learned by experience to prize his own mode of religion, to endeavour to extend that mode, and bring others within the pale of his own worship—is an operation to which establishments are hostile, and which has never been thoroughly harmonised with them.

But there are other topics in this argumentation to which it is needful to advert. I shall first read to you the passage in which he endeavours to assimilate the two things, as his argument requires that he should make out the similitude. He says: "Let the sentiment prevail, that it is good to pay for the Christian instruction of those who either cannot or will not pay for it themselves; and a government, when adding its own great national subscription to those of the many individuals who have preceded and pointed the way to it, is not thwarting the sentiment by which they were actuated, but only giving further expression, or larger and more lasting effect to it. There is no fear lest a popular government like ours will award a grant for the erection or the endowment of churches, till they anticipate a virtual ratification of the deed by a preponderance of feeling in its favour from without; or till encouraged to the measure, if not by the numerical majority of tax-payers, at least by that class of them whose larger payments constitute the vast majority of by far the larger part of the revenue of our nation. In as far then as they are concerned, we behold in an ecclesiastical provision by the state an example of external voluntaryism, or a willing public contributing of their wealth to the Christian instruction of the common people, through the medium of a willing government. It only differs from a separate or a personal contribution by the channel of conveyance through which it passes, or as a mite given by the hand to some individual object of charity differs from a mite cast into a treasury that has been opened for the relief of this and of all similar objects. When, instead of local establishments for the good of so many special districts, raised by the munificence of individuals, we behold a great national establishment for the good of the whole country, and raised by an endowment from the state, we only see the final development of an anterior tendency, which operated

in the minds of many thousands of private Christians; or their collective mind finding its outlet, and its ultimate expression or effect, in the act of a government. A parliamentary vote, then, in aid of religious education is, both in principle and effect, but an example of the voluntary principle *ab extra*."

Now, in this passage there is the suppression of sundry most important distinctions, and of these first,—that, in the act of government, the non-religious are taxed as well as the religious, and this makes it a widely different thing from the self-imposed tax of the religious in order to make a gratuitous offering of instruction to the non-religious. It is a difference which cannot fail to excite, and always has excited, a prejudice against the religion which is so propounded, which employs such means for its proselytism. What is Dr. Chalmers' complaint of the state of the greater part of the community? He says there is no demand for religion. Will taxing them make them demand it? Will the imposition upon them of a price or of a penalty beforehand induce men to crave that which, according to him, they had previously disliked, and of which their dislike is yet stronger? Will religious principle be infused into their hearts by the action of withdrawing pence from their pockets? Would the conversion of Otaheite, to the proselyting of which by voluntary missions he refers on several occasions, have been accelerated, if a previous tax could have been levied on the inhabitants for a religion first tangibly known to them in the form of that imposition? It is plain that, whatever action it is desirable to set up on the non-religious in order to stimulate the demand for religion, the previous levying of a tax upon them is one of the last that could possibly be contemplated. I say nothing now of the question of right—nothing of the power which, if the majority of a nation should happen to be non-religious, that majority has assuredly the right of exercising. If a government be, as he describes ours, representative—if it be the business of that government to speak the opinion and will of the nation—if those who constitute such government are sent to occupy the posts which they fill, and are vested with the important powers which they possess, by a population whose majority is non-religious,—surely their acts ought to be non-religious also, and they should

oppose then, with all the legislative privileges which they possess, such an interposition of authority as he here invokes them to exercise.

Another important distinction between the voluntary principle, and what he calls "extra-voluntaryism," or the act of government, is, that under the former, however remote may be the scene of proselyting, however expensive the efforts which are embarked in, still the religious neither tax the non-religious, nor do they tax the religious of other denominations. Each sect, each party, the votaries of each system, pay for their own missionaries, and for no other; or, if they enter into any sympathetic rivalry with others, still the contributions, on both sides, are voluntary. But when it becomes a national affair—when it is a tax imposed by the legislature—not only the non-religious, but the otherwise religious, are taxed for some particular form, some mode of faith and worship. Now, this excites feelings, and raises obstacles to the progress of real religion, of a different order from that taxation on the non-religious to which I have just adverted. In that case, a penalty is levied upon a man because he is presumed to have no conscience. In this case, a penalty is levied on a man because he is presumed to have too much conscience. If he have no religion at all, he shall pay because it is supposed he ought to have one; and if he have a religion of his own, he shall pay for that voluntarily and for another involuntarily, because he ought to have had some other religion. What is the effect of this but to produce a conflict of temporal interests between the votaries of different forms of religion—a conflict in which the purest modes of zeal and the most expansive forms of charity are sure to perish?

Another difference between voluntaryism and establishments is, that in the former case there is some tolerable security that the work paid for will be accomplished; in the other case, there is a strong presumption that the work paid for will not be realised. Those who freely contribute to the establishment of missions, whether domestic or foreign, who have the choice of the managers of those missions, and the direction of their extent, their agency, their application, will be sure to select men spontaneously offering themselves, who are full of zeal for the same pur-

pose; and should there be any difficulty as to appropriate mental aptitude, there will at least be the agreement of sympathy—there will be a common feeling pervading those with whom the scheme originated and all the various agents employed to carry it into successful execution. But when this becomes the act of a government, notions of property and of patronage interfere. The check of responsibility to those from whom the contribution proceeds, is altogether withdrawn, and the presumption—we might reason upon it as an abstract question, if history and experience had not shown the actual working of the thing—the presumption is, that offices will be held with little labour, in proportion as they are endowed with large emoluments; and that, throughout the whole system, from its highest dignities to its meanest agencies, there will be that tendency towards sinecurism which has ever shown itself in connection with establishments; and which, with all their wealth, and the advantages of territorial distribution, on which Dr. Chalmers lays so much stress, have ever been found to leave their real work, the energetic enlightenment of the people, to be accomplished by those who find their impulses in their own hearts, and their rewards in the contemplation of their own success.

Another difference is, that in the one case the civil equality of different classes of citizens is violated. When religion is promoted by voluntary churches and missions, those who engage in the work are only distinguished from their fellow-citizens by moral qualities. They may be venerated as philanthropists, or they may be despised as enthusiasts—they may be held in high regard for their religion and their zeal, or they may be thought meddlesome and troublesome persons, turning the world of thought upside down by the wildness of their notions, and disliked accordingly; but whether they are prized or despised, their difference from others is only a difference of feeling, of character; it is not one which enters into any of their civil relations—they are still, in their different denominations, equal with one another—they are still, in all the varieties and pretensions of religion, on the same level with the non-religious in their external civil and social relations—they are all alike in the eye of institutions and of laws. But the moment the measure Dr. Chalmers proposes

is introduced—the moment government makes itself a party to this matter—the moment the establishment of churches and the working of missions becomes the affair of a national legislature,—there arise two classes in the country—a class which coincides with the governmental faith and worship, and a class which dissents from it—the one being in a higher social position than the other; there is the institution of caste, analogous to that in the East. The unfavourable operation of this upon all questions of civil liberty—the advantage which it gives to any power that arises in the strength of a sinister interest, in order to gratify itself at the expense of the public interest, is sufficiently obvious, as also are the host of evils which such distinctions must generate through all the ranks and gradations of a community.

There is, then, a broad and tangible distinction between the two things of which Dr. Chalmers' argument requires the identification; and were we only to strike at this link in the chain of his reasoning, the manner in which it gives way, in which it falls asunder at the first blow, would be sufficient to demolish all the claims for that argument to be considered as demonstrative as he supposes it to be.

He next goes on, having thus brought religion and government into contact, to argue the justification of rulers in the selection of a particular religion, on the ground either of its truth or of its utility. He holds them to be competent judges of both—he represents it as perfectly within their functions to decide that one system is true, and that another theology is false, and, on the strength of that conviction, to apply the national resources to the establishment of one and for discountenancing the other. In doing this, it could not be but that he should come in contact with rulers of different convictions. This does not seem to be at all a stumbling-block to him. He says: "Without tracing our way so far backward, grant the sincerity of the potentate—of James, for example, in his Catholicism; of Charles in his episcopacy; and the Elector of Saxony in his Lutheran Protestantism—it may be said, both of him who succeeded and of those who failed in the establishment of their own doctrine as the national faith, that all three in the attempts which they made were alike conscientious, and this might serve for the vin-

dication of the men—even as it would serve for the vindication of five hundred men, if the power, instead of being concentrated in one individual, were lodged in such an assembly, and they gave forth their collective voice in favour of an establishment which coincided with the faith of the majority. The only other reason we can sustain in vindication is one of patriotism, as the former was one of piety; or which had respect to the temporal as the other had respect to the spiritual well-being of the people. We can imagine a monarch without the principle of religion, but of sound enlightened policy—we mean the policy which has for its object, not the maintenance or the increase of his own power, but the prosperity of his kingdom and the present welfare of its families. The one is a justifiable motive on a heavenly, the other is a justifiable motive on an earthly, standard."

The effect, then, of this argument would be to justify James the Second, on the "heavenly standard," in his attempt to impose Popery on this nation, as this was his sincere conviction; while it only justifies the introduction and establishment of Protestantism, at its first early appearance in this country, on the "earthly standard." Moreover, it justifies any ruler, on any standard, or with any system whatever, because this conscientiousness may belong to the Papist as well as to the Protestant, to the unbeliever as well as to the believer, to the Mahometan as well as to the Christian, to the Hindoo idolater as well as to the Parsee, to those who deified the Goddess of Reason during the French Revolution as well as to those who have established any form of theism or of Christianity whatever. There is no limit to the justification which it offers on behalf of rulers in the establishment of any religion or superstition—of that theism or that idolatry, whatever it may be, which their own minds may entertain; and, according to the analogy of the writer's own reasoning, that which justifies the establishment justifies and demands conformity. There are correlative duties between rulers and subjects—that which is religion in one cannot be irreligion in the other; and if the motives of a government on the "heavenly standard," as Dr. Chalmers represents, require the imposition of any particular form of faith, surely the "heavenly standard" requires of the subjects of such rule that they should conform to the religion so

justifiably imposed; and thus it would become his duty, and that of those who think like him, to conform to the superstitions of any country in which they might be resident—to give themselves to any form of worship which the rulers of those countries had conscientiously imposed. The bias of this mode of reasoning in the estimation of character is one which must suggest itself to every reflective mind. It leads Dr. Chalmers to speak in terms of approbation of one who has not generally been so treated by enlightened historians: his vindication of the motives of Constantine in his first establishment of Christianity, although, for a moment, he seems to hesitate whether he shall ascribe it to his policy or to religion, yet leading him to such a violation of historical truth concerning the character of that sovereign as will scarcely bear investigation. After speaking of it as in some measure doubtful whether it was the piety of Constantine or the policy of Constantine which led to his espousal of Christianity, "and determined him to throw the shield, not only of his imperial protection, but of his imperial patronage, over it;" he continues, "If the former explanation be the true one—if the change of his profession originated in the power of truth and principle—then he but did upon his throne what a Christian parent does in his family. The one carried into effect the wishes of a Christianised heart over a larger, as the other does over a smaller sphere of operation. Each, by the arrangements of Providence, obtained a certain measure of ascendency over other minds and other consciences than their own; and gifted as the one was with influence over an empire, and the other with influence over a household, we behold in each the example of a gift consecrated to the honour of Him who is the Universal Giver; and whom they now believed to be the author of that Christianity sent down from heaven on purpose to rule and to regenerate the world. In compliance with this great duty, and as fellow-workers with God, the one did for his subjects what the other does for his children—provided them with a Christian education, as the best boon which a religious monarch can confer upon his people. On the supposition of the monarch being himself a Christian, such is the account, and such also we deem to be the vindication, of that procedure by which he awarded a maintenance to the teachers of the gospel, and bade them,

in return, carry the lessons and services of the gospel throughout his population. But he may have been no Christian; and policy, not principle, may after all be the key for the explanation of his conduct. He must, then, be tried by a different standard; and if he cannot be vindicated as a religious, he may at least be vindicated as a wise governor; and that not because he conceded to the religion of the majority, but because he consented to place his subjects under the best moral regimen for the formation of a virtuous and well-ordered commonwealth."

Such is his notion of the man who rose to imperial power by fraud and by crime—of the man whose own guilt was so deep in his conscience, that he deferred his baptism until death seemed to be fast approaching, because he had a superstitious notion that sins committed after baptism were less easily disposed of, atoned for, washed out, than those which were committed anterior to what he yet considered as the initial rite of Christianity,—the man who exercised this heavenly influence, this providential ascendency over their minds and consciences, which is spoken of as analogous to the influence of a parent over his children, in order to impose laws of the most persecuting, and some of them of the most cruel, nature,—the man who decreed the forfeiture of half the estates of those who adhered to what had been his own religion in former times, if they spoke reproachfully of Christ,—the man who taxed the people to build Christian churches in localities inhabited only by Jewish subjects, thus adding insult to oppression and exaction,—who enacted that the word of a bishop in any trial should be received as final evidence, whatever other evidence the case might be capable of admitting, whatever contradictory testimony there might exist; thus polluting the stream of justice, and rendering the decision of cases, civil or criminal, an affair not of truth, but merely of ecclesiastical situation,—the man who made it penal for those who were called heretical to assemble together in their own places of worship, and who, though he abolished, perhaps on a superstitious principle, the punishment of crucifixion, yet introduced the more cruel punishment of burning to death—a punishment that afterwards became appropriated to heresy; this is the man who is represented, for the purpose of the argument before us, as

exercising a providential influence on the minds that were placed by Heaven under his power and control, in much the same spirit as when, in the American war, the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage were carried into the conflict to strike terror into those who were misnamed rebels, this was called, in our legislature, "using the weapons which God and nature have put into our hands."

But let us look a little further at this general competency of rulers, of despotic sovereigns, or of legislative bodies connected together by the ordinary machinery of representation, to decide the truth of conflicting systems of theology. It is the notion of Dr. Chalmers, that as to Popery and Protestantism they may decide on the question of truth, while in the selection of a Protestant sect he thinks they should be guided by convenience. "This" (the Papal question) "was not a question which could only be resolved in an assembly of priests or of scholastics; but a question that might be rightly entertained, and rightly decided also, in any assembly of well-educated Englishmen. We could not imagine a more testing evidence of an incompetent and vulgarised parliament, than that it should not be qualified to decide the question between the merits of Protestantism and Popery—or which of the two systems, not in respect of policy, but in respect of absolute truth and of sacred obligation, is the most worthy of being upholden as the national faith of these realms. This is neither a minute nor is it a manifold controversy, but one great and simple question, on which too there shine the broadest lights both of moral and historical evidence: and that is, whether the scriptures, as being of Divine authority, be the only rule of faith and practice in religion—or whether, coördinate therewith, the decisions of any councils or governors in the Church, after the days of the apostles, should be admitted to an equal or superior lordship over the consciences of men. This, of all the countries in Europe, is not the land where it should be difficult to find hundreds or even thousands of the upper and middle classes in society, with information enough and scholarship enough to pronounce intelligently upon this question—the richest of Christendom in that literature, and accessible too to all readers, the literature of the Christian evidences—the land of the Stillingfleets, and the Clarkes,

and the Butlers, and the Lardners, and the Paleys—or if any shall recoil from these ecclesiastical names, the land of deepest reasoners in philosophy, of Bacon, and Newton, and Milton, and Locke, and Boyle, and Sir Gilbert West, and Lord Lyttelton, all of whom have done profoundest homage to Christianity, and many of them have told, and with irresistible weight of argument, that the voice in the scriptures is a voice which speaketh to us from heaven. In this nation, of all others, there is none with the ordinary schooling of a gentleman, who could not thoroughly inform himself, and by the reading of a few weeks, on this great question, so as to decide between the authority of the Bible and the authority of Rome's apostolic church; between the miracles of the gospel performed in the face of the then civilised world, and the mummeries of the Papal superstition, transmitted to us in barbarous legends, those products of the cells and the convents which overspread Europe through the dark and dreary millennium of the Middle Ages. We owe it to its Church and its universities together, that this knowledge is so rife in England—familiar as household words in so many of its accomplished circles, so many of its ancestral halls—and that, not because of any professional interest in theology as a science, but in virtue alone of a full and finished education. It is thus that we have abundant materials for a parliament that could decide the question on its high and proper merits."

There are two most unfortunate circumstances in this description of general competency for decision as to the truth or falsehood of a theology. We have here accumulated the names of men who were, indeed, all of them illustrious—of men whose intellectual attainments and whose intellectual powers contribute to the brightest glory of our country; but men who were at the very extremes of theological opinion. We are competent, or the House of Commons is competent, says Dr. Chalmers, to decide on the question of theological truth; because they have read the works of Butler, Lardner, and Paley,—men who differed from one another in all the gradations that have been held to constitute the most orthodox and the most heretical theology,—the surest path to salvation, and the certain warrant of eternal damnation. He accumulates together a number of other names—names of laymen,

that may demand reverence where these clerical names fail: Lord Bacon, who, with all his mighty powers, assuredly wrote on religion in such a way as most intelligent men would now deem superstitious—Lord Bacon, who was the author of that famous phrase, that "Religion contains things at which Reason stands aghast, and Faith herself is half confounded," and whose name is immediately followed by those of Newton, Milton, and Locke—all three the names of men who departed widely from the theology which Dr. Chalmers deems alone the Christian theology, and inclined towards, or held decidedly, those Unitarian opinions which he would exclude from the privileges of an establishment, and reckon among the errors from which men need conversion. Truly, if these are to be the guides of a legislature, we can have but little security for coming to a uniform or unanimous decision. But there is another curious feature in this statement, and that is in the description of the point to be decided upon; because if the question between the Catholic and the Protestant be one so simple that 650 men, selected on widely different accounts from the bulk of the community, may assuredly be held competent, the question ought to be so simple that a doctor of theology should make no very material mistake in the very mode of putting that question. Now, what is it on which they are to decide? Whether the scriptures, as being of divine authority, be the only rule of faith and practice in religion; or whether coördinate therewith the decisions of any councils or governors in the Church after the days of the apostles should be admitted to an equal or superior lordship over the consciences of men? This, according to Dr. Chalmers, is the point on which the legislature may most easily decide, as a broad question of truth or falsehood,—he forgetting that the Protestantism of this country, that the Church of England—which with him is the very representative of Protestantism as opposed to Popery in this question—in its twentieth article claims for the Church the power of ordaining rites and ceremonies—claims therein a power coördinate with that of the apostles—claims a lordship over the conscience so far as these things are matters of conscience.

We come, then, to the last stage of this argument—the expediency of selecting some one sect or denomination,

Now, in most particulars the decision on this expediency has been involved in the train of reasoning which I have already pursued. Whatever belongs to it positively has been disposed of, I think, in showing that establishments must lack a missionary spirit,—that they tend to alienate the resources of a nation, that should be employed for general purposes, to those which are particular,—that they distinguish and classify the country as to civil privileges, thereby operating upon it most injuriously,—that the territorial arrangement on which Dr. Chalmers lays so much stress is, to a certain extent, more efficiently pursued by Methodism in the distribution of its voluntary operation, and in the New-England home mission, than in connection with the establishment, and that the Christianising power of a state, if it exists at all, exists in the general promotion of knowledge rather than in any direct patronage of theology.

The questions of the prevention of crime, and of subserviency to the commercial interests or the political liberties of a country, which are the main branches of the question of utility as to religious establishments, are by no means so promptly to be decided in favour of Protestantism as some may imagine. We owe to a Catholic community, that of Maryland, the first formal and legislative recognition of the rights of all classes, and their admission to the same civil privileges. We have seen Catholic countries—as France and Poland, Switzerland (before the Reformation) and Belgium—foremost in the assertion of political rights, and in defence of liberal modes of government, while we have seen in connection with Protestantism many of the most offensive exhibitions of tyranny and persecution on religious accounts. But I quit all this now, to conclude with noticing the way in which the establishment of a particular system of theology acts upon the mental cultivation, upon what may be called the spiritual interests, of the individual and of the community. A nation, he says, should commit itself to a theology. And what is theology? It is assuredly not something that can be defined, whose hard outline can be presented to us like that of mathematical or physical science. Theology is the knowledge or science of God—most imperfect, remote, shadowy, even in the clearest and strong-

est minds; for what can we know of God, the infinite, everlasting spirit of the universe? What have the best and the wisest attained to but merely some few elementary principles, some few ascertained thoughts, leading them to grope for, to aspire after, other principles or thoughts alike elementary, and which only conduct them but a narrow step onwards in their acquaintance with this great subject? What is theology but a result, a final result, of whatever can be brought into combination to act upon the human mind—the sense of law, of harmony, of order, of beauty, of beneficence, which we derive from all the diversified objects of contemplation on which the human intellect can be exercised? We trace the record of past ages, we read of wondrous occurrences and of strange combinations, and of the working out through many generations, through hundreds and thousands of years, and by the agencies of those who inhabited different countries, of some previously purposed result, and, looking at these, the impression made upon our mind of a superintending Providence is theology. Or we consider the powers and principles of moral action—the laws which bind together the sands upon the sea-shore, and roll the planets in their courses, and which seem to obtain even to the remotest star, whose light may have travelled for thousands of years, nor yet arrived in the sight of mortal beings; we behold those laws combining to produce the utmost degree of physical majesty and the most diversified forms of material beauty; and, as we recognise their varied ministerings to the purposes of intelligence, we recognise a spirit diffused over all—we call it God—we worship,—and this is theology. Or the heart goes forth in search of some power or principle on which it may rely; we feel the need of compassion, of mercy, of protection, of benediction, of light and consolation for the past, and of hope for futurity,—and this is theology. And this principle,—so fine, so intangible, so individual, so much the result of all that acts from without upon each particular soul within,—this, we are told, is something to be patronised by government—to be taken up by rulers—to be the subject of Acts of Parliament and of royal decrees. And what can result from its being made so but the transformation into the very vainest of forms of that which, left to itself, is the intensest of realities?

It is not merely to the establishment of theology that the argument endeavours to lead us—it is not merely Christian theology—although that would be entangling us with great incongruities ; for however simple, however clear, true, and beautiful, Christian theology is, yet it is assuredly both refined and complex. It is not put before us in a few distinct articles—it is not exhibited in the New Testament in any systematic arrangement, so that we may grasp it in its fundamental propositions and in its minute details. It is an aggregate of impressions, which we have to derive from incidental language, in which we have to consider well the import of facts—of facts which seem exhibited to the human race as pictures are exhibited to children, that they may contemplate them and reason upon them, and derive thence each his own interpretation, according to the progress of his own mind. Christian theology is the result of the Jewish theology which preceded it ; it is one link, it may be the last link, of a long chain of intimations or suggestions, each tending to affect the character of theology, and to perfect its elevation from the mythical representation that Adam heard the voice of God walking among the trees of the garden of Eden in the cool of the day, up to the representation which Christ gave of God as the universal Father, whom all nations and all religions should worship with filial piety as his children: and this, assuredly, is no subject of social compact, of legislative adoption, of parliamentary enforcement. But the argument aims at carrying us even far beyond this. It is not merely Christian theology that is to be established, but some particular sectarian form of Christian theology. The Sovereign and the Houses of Lords and Commons are to commit the nation to take a side in the interpretation of texts—they are to commit it to one side in the contest of great theological authorities. The nation is to be for Demetrius, and against Origen—for St. Athanasius, and against Arius ; to take part with the Council of Nice in recognising the authenticity of the book of Revelation, and against the Council of Laodicea in doubting the authenticity of the book of Revelation ; it is to decide, as to the text concerning the heavenly witnesses, that Archdeacon Travis was right, and thought right, and that Professor Porson was wrong in thinking it an interpolation—to take part with Archbishop Cranmer in his predilection for Epis-

copal church-government, and against John Calvin in his maintenance of Presbyterian church-government—to become a party, in short, to the minutest squabblings; it is to decide on the truth or error of the interpretation of texts which require reference to the Greek and Hebrew, and a long array of authorities, in order to decide with what power words were used, and on what principle sentences were compacted; it is to say that Barclay was wrong in interpreting one class of texts, or that Winchester was wrong in interpreting another class of texts;—and thus the nation, the great intellectual power of the nation, is to be degraded and compressed into a little pragmatical, dogmatical, bigoted, and persecuting sectarianism. And not only so; but, with the littleness of sectarianism, there is to be its virulence also,—there is to be that disposition to sit in judgment upon the thoughts and characters of others, which is even worse than the maintenance of a sectarian mind and argument. So that the nation is not only to take part in all those little, petty, verbal controversies, but it is also to take the part of sectarianism in its antagonistic feelings, in its censure, in its hypocritical assumption, in its derogatory impositions; and is to condemn every individual as guilty of moral depravity who deviates from this comprehensive standard of faith, worship, and practice. Here is a matter to come before the British House of Commons—that House whose members on election committees so often find it difficult to determine whether there was bribery or a guilty knowledge of bribery in an election contest!—they hesitate about moral depravity there, where matters of clear and broad fact can be brought before them by witnesses; and yet they are to be held competent to pierce into the depths of men's hearts, to unfold the secrets of their bosoms, and decide that those who think as Locke, Newton, and Lardner thought, think so because there lurks within them some seed of mental and moral depravity!

The establishment of a theology sectarianises a nation; and it not only imparts a little, sectarian, and virulent spirit to its acts as a nation, but it carries these into the distributions of society—it excites feelings of this description, acting and reacting upon one another through all the different classes of the community; and thus it renders merely hypocritical, formal, narrow, and malignant, that which

should be the most open, broad, noble, and generous of human principles.

Moreover, such an establishment secularises religion—it brings the theology, the remote and intangible theology which I have described, into contact with amount of income, with station or gradations of dignity in society, with the particular interests of parties, with the earthly prospects of individuals; it supersedes moral instruction,—for wherever religion is established, wherever theology is established, its preachers claim to be moral teachers, and to furnish all the moral instruction a country needs—and what kind of moral education have they ever realised? Precepts vain and indeterminate,—boldly asserted, but never combined into system,—their arbitrary selection suggesting the operation of sinister interests,—and all tending to keep the people devoid of any thing like a clear apprehension of their moral concerns, of a distinct object at which to aim, or of a rational course by which to realise it; and thus, through weakness and indistinctness, as well as through false bias, making the establishment of theology an agent for the demoralisation of a community.

But most of all does the establishment of a theology bear perniciously on the rights of individuals, their mental and moral rights. The minutest objects of contemplation to which Dr. Chalmers seems disposed to descend are the rights of sects; he glances at these,—and having glanced at them, he rides over them; for he says the question of establishments is not a question of justice between sect and sect,—all that government has to do is to take some one denomination whose clergy will answer its purpose,—and that done, its duty is accomplished. This may be questioned. What, then, becomes of individual minds? For under all this press of sinister and worldly interest—amid all this turmoil of bigoted passion and of assuming imposition—with all this hard condensation of what in itself is the most pure and ethereal principle of humanity—what can be the case, but that individuality is quenched and lost, and that men are regimented together in the profession of opinions of which they know little more than the form of words in which they are embodied, and which have an artificial hold upon them from their identification with a variety of secular interests?

There is a far more important antithesis than that to which Dr. Chalmers adverts between the Papal and Protestant forms of theology; and that is, between any kind of imposition and the benefits of universal liberty of thought and of speech. Only as these are recognised can the human mind advance, and the moral and spiritual culture of our nature be carried to its greatest perfection. Whatever may be done—and I think that much may and ought to be done—by institutions for educational purposes—by territorially arranging the country, so that no district be destitute of the means of infantile instruction, of the means for training youth, of various libraries, museums, and establishments for every useful species of instruction, and of amusement and enjoyment even, that the population can require: whatever may be done in this way, and however much the nation may be eventually Christianised by doing all this, with establishments of this kind government should stop, leaving theology alone—leaving it to the bold individuality that would be thus cherished; and while, by education and by institutions, they would furnish the broad basis, would spread the table-land on which genius is to operate, they should then leave it for each one to build thereon according to his own capacity and inclination—to raise high, like the "cloud-capped towers," the aspirations of his mind to heaven; or to enrich it and extend it, until it resembled the "gorgeous palaces;" or to make it the scene of devotion, of regard to the great Spirit that pervades the universe, until its soul belonged to earth's "solemn temples." This would create the diversity and subserve the utility which belong to the higher interests of our nature, exhibiting all nature's variety, and drawing down the benediction of its Creator; whilst all else artificial, secular, and sinister in its origin and its progress—all establishments and institutions not harmonising with the purity of truth, and with the dictates of our common human heart—would pass away, and,

> "Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
> Leave not a wrack behind."

CAIN AND ABEL.

June 17th, 1838.

The subject of the lecture this morning is the story of Cain and Abel, as we find it narrated in the first seventeen verses of the 4th chapter of Genesis; and I have led your attention towards it by previous expository lectures on the first three chapters of that book.* They contain what I regard as two independent documents—the theory of the creation, in the 1st chapter to the 3d verse of the 2d chapter; and the mythos of the fall, in the remainder of the 2d and the whole of the 3d chapter—which are followed by what I shall now treat as the allegorical tradition of Cain and Abel.

I have already hinted to you that—among many of the indications of their having been written at different times and by different authors—these documents are distinguished in a remarkable manner by the different names applied in them to the Deity. In the first of them, the title of the Deity is Elohim—rendered God by our translators, but being in itself properly a plural word, although joined with singular verbs and adjectives; thus showing the attempt of the writer to make the first step in the transition from the language of idolatry to that of monotheism. The second of these productions, the mythos of the Fall,—the story of Adam, Eve, and the serpent,—unites this plural word Elohim, or Gods, with Jehovah, the proper name of the Deity, according to the then rising Jewish theology. The language in the story of Cain and Abel drops this combination, and uses the term Jehovah alone,—thus making the transition complete by these three gradations; after which time, the term Jehovah, translated Lord, and Elohim, rendered God, are used interchangeably

* See Lectures on chaps. ii. and iii. of Genesis, in vol. x. pp. 287, 302.

through many of the Hebrew compositions. But although the transition marks an advance in the use of language, we can scarcely consider it as denoting a corresponding advance in the conceptions entertained of the Deity by those who employ it. The views which we have of the Divine power and wisdom, and of the mode of Divine operation, in the first of these documents—the theory of creation—are certainly more simple, more sublime, more consistent, altogether more worthy, as far as any human conceptions can be worthy, of the subject, than those which are contained in the subsequent documents, and especially in the one before us. The advance in theological nomenclature was not accompanied by a corresponding advance in theological perception. And why? Because the circumstance of nationality interposed. "Elohim," "Gods"—the writings in which that appellation of the Deity is used were the production of men whose clear and devout and strong minds were forcing their way, and endeavouring to lead others, out of the doctrines of idolatry—men who thought for themselves, men who had the source of inspiration in their own individuality of intelligence; whilst those who used the name of Jehovah were becoming identified with the national system of faith and worship, and they fell into the common evil of such a system. The Deity became regarded as a tutelary God, the peculiar patron of the Jewish people. His attributes were darkened by vindictiveness, his powers were limited by locality; and we find notions superinduced on those which had been entertained, that show a restricted, bigoted, and in some respects a fierce and persecuting, spirit, such as has commonly associated itself with a national religion and a national priesthood and worship.

The progress of the Jewish theology—the history of opinion, as opinion was entertained amongst the descendants of Abraham, and as it was expressed by their writers—has been elaborately, and I think, in the main, with some exceptions, correctly traced, in a work recently rendered into our language from the German—I refer to Bauer's *Theology of the Old Testament*, which exhibits the opinions of the ancient Hebrews from the earliest times to the commencement of the Christian era. In this work, each

book is taken according to the date which, on the most diligent research, seems best to accord with the circumstances of its production: and from one period to another, the theology of the time as held by the ancient Hebrews is depicted,—so that we may trace its early barbarism—its gradual progress and development—its conflicts with the difficulties which arose from the circumstances of their institutions, and the peculiarities, first of their republican, and afterwards of their kingly, government—until that preparation was made, which the education of the Hebrews in ancient times was intended to make, for the simple, more genial, and benignant doctrines of Christianity. The result of these researches is thus briefly summed up in his conclusion. He says:

"Our investigation has led us to the following conclusions:

"1. The historical books of the Old Testament contain the most crude and unworthy notions of God and of his providence. The human representations of the Deity given in Genesis are quite in character with the mode of thinking which prevailed in the infancy of mankind. Jehovah is portrayed as the national God of the Hebrews throughout the historical writings.

"2. The notions concerning God contained in the books of the Prophets—particularly in those which were written after the captivity—though strictly Judaical, are certainly less limited, and less remote from truth.

"3. The purest and most elevated conceptions of God are to be found in those books which were composed by private individuals, who either disregarded the peculiar national ideas and prejudices of their countrymen, or had raised themselves above them. It was not so much by the teaching of their priests and prophets, as by the studies and contemplations of their other wise men, that the religious principle was cultivated and developed among the Jewish people."*

* *The Theology of the Old Testament;* or, a Biblical Sketch of the Religious Opinions of the Ancient Hebrews, from the earliest times to the commencement of the Christian era. Extracted and translated from the *Theologie des alten Testaments* of Georg Lorenz Bauer, Professor of Oriental Languages and of Logic at Altdorf, and afterwards of Oriental Languages and Biblical Criticism at Heidelberg. London, 1838.

And confirmation of this will be found, if we glance for a moment at the character of the different books of the Old Testament,—at the uniformly confined notions concerning the Deity which pervade such writings, for instance, as the books of Kings and Chronicles; or the loftier conceptions of the ancient drama of Job, the Ecclesiastes of Solomon, and many of the Psalms of David—which were the productions of such men as Bauer describes, men who did not belong to the prophetic or the priestly class, but who represented the intelligence of their nation in its loftiest operations. And thus has it ever been: it has not been by the strict regulations of institutions—it has not been by the official labours of separated classes—that real religious knowledge or real religious feeling has been advanced, perpetuated, and disseminated; but by the influence of individual minds, brought to bear upon others with all their native freedom and their native freshness.

I have described the story of Cain and Abel as inferior in character to the two separate works which have already been the subject of expository lectures; and I have denominated these, the Theory of Creation, and the Mythos of the Fall: the propriety of these appellations must be evident. The description of the Creation does not profess to be, nor could it profess to be, the narrative of a witness of that extraordinary operation. It does not assert claims to immediate revelation or divine communication,—nor could it sustain such claims, on account of its various collisions with the discoveries of science, and with those undeniable and enduring characters of truth which are inscribed upon the earth itself, which are read in geology, and which tell a long story of former existence, of former convulsions, and of operations that have exhibited themselves in the materials of this our globe through long millions of years. The science of the creation theory is indefensible. The writer evidently regarded the heavenly bodies as subordinate to the wants and convenience of this our world. He considered the globe as the central point of creation, and the great object of creative attention. In the description of the several days of the creation, he has often represented as immediate that which must needs have been the result of a long train of physical combinations; while, on the other hand, he has sometimes made that gradual

which may well be conceived to have been immediate. But notwithstanding all this, there is a magnificence in the successive scenes of creation, as he has pictured them,—in the works of his six days, each rising in grandeur above the other, and in the terseness and beauty of expression which he has often employed, as in that memorable phrase, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light,"—which will ever make his composition to be regarded with interest and veneration.

We find nothing of this in the writer of the narrative of Cain and Abel. He soars to no such sublimity. He does not realise with the like vividness of fancy the scenery which he had to portray; nor does he manifest any of that deep wisdom which appears in the delineation of idolatry under the figure of the serpent, and of its allurement by the promise of superior wisdom, as described in the temptation by which the first pair became acquainted with the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and of evil. He has not realised in this narrative the scenery of his description. He does not seem to have been impressed with the then state of the world as one vast wilderness—with but a solitary spot, of most limited confine, in which dwelt the then sole human inhabitants, the one family of Adam and Eve, and their children. He does not seem to have realised the state of society—if society it may be called—which then existed; devoid of all the regulations, of all the complexities, of all the different manifestations of human action and passion, which belong to a more multitudinous condition of humanity, when cities are built, and nations are in the process of formation. And least of all does he seem to have realised what might have been expected to be the great topic of his narrative—the entrance of death into the world; at least, as it affects the human race. Here was a subject, indeed, which might be supposed to have deeply impressed an imaginative and spiritual constitution, —which certainly would have called forth, from the pens of those employed in the previous compositions, language the impressiveness of which would have been felt from generation to generation. It would have been something to mark how the first victory of the king of terrors was obtained over humanity—what feelings, what bewilderment, what consternation, it occasioned in the few then

existent beings that were its witnesses; for death is ever an impressive and ever a difficult subject of contemplation, —it is a notion which, perhaps, we can never be said to realise; it is what always, in its first advances towards the circle with which we are connected, seems to come on us with surprise, and fills us with astonishment. Childhood does not realise death—cannot be said to believe in death—has no conception of it;—though generation after generation has been passing away for these thousands of years, and the inevitable nature of the fact is inscribed upon every memorial of humanity, yet the notion is never vividly, is never strongly conceived or realised, until some one of the circle of our acquaintances or relatives becomes its victim, and then it is regarded with a kind of astounded feeling, which the mind rather turns away from than strives to grasp and master: nor, perhaps, is the sense of personal mortality realised by any individual until sickness has shaken the frame—until the sense of the power of dissolution over us, manifested, as it were, by some overt act upon our own constitution, has made us feel that we are doomed to die—that death is for us a reality. And even after this, the imagination only conceives a life in death; it does not believe in the extinction of being: and hence even savages in dreams have seen those that were departed; they have heard their spirits in the wailing of the wind, or have beheld their forms careering on the clouds. Every thing in nature protests, as it were, against death—maintains a struggle with the very notion of death; and the fact of its first advance, of its triumph over humanity, is one that, with a writer of any strength of poetical conception and imagination, would assuredly have led to a species of reflection and description which I do not find here.

The creation, as I said, is a theory; the fall, a mythos: and I take the narrative of Cain and Abel to be an allegorised tradition. To a certain extent, the writer had a purpose which was in affinity with those who had written before him. They were in conflict between a purer theism and Egyptian idolatry. They had made advances in that conflict. He, like them, was an Israelite, most likely—an Israelite by descent—an Israelite in feeling—an Israelite in the purpose and objects which were dearest to his heart, and which guided his mind in this composition. As they

looked first at the imperfections, and then at the temptations, of Egyptian idolatry, he looked towards the era of the Mosaic deliverance. I take him to have written just before Moses interposed as the redeemer of his people and the great founder of the Jewish nation; and, bearing in mind the state of things which then existed, we may see a remarkable parallelism between the two characters in the story, and the two nations or tribes which were then brought into collision. Cain is described as a tiller of the ground—Abel, as a keeper of sheep; the Egyptians were an agricultural people—the Hebrews, a pastoral one; Cain is described as the elder brother—Abel as the younger; Egypt was the oldest of nations, the primogenitor of empires —while Israel was only then in the adolescence of national existence. Cain offered the fruits of the earth as an act of worship—and the Egyptians, we are told, were accustomed to make only, or chiefly, such sacrifices; they did not generally shed blood in their worship—nay, they held blood-shedding in abhorrence: while the Israelites uniformly offered animal sacrifice, and it was the danger to which they were exposed by the popular feeling of the Egyptians which led Moses to urge upon Pharaoh the necessity of going into the wilderness to offer their sacrifices. The Israelites were invited down into Egypt—and Cain is represented as leading Abel into the fields for the purpose of his murder. It was after this friendly invitation to sojourn in the land of Goshen, that the Israelites became subject to oppressions so enormous as not only to task their toil, but eventually to endanger their lives. We find that the greatest consternation prevailed when Pharaoh ordered their male children to be destroyed; and it was in this sanguinary attempt that the excitement reached its highest, and that they cried to the Lord for deliverance: as in the fictitious narrative the voice of Abel's blood cries from the ground to Heaven, so in the history the Deity is represented as saying, "I have heard the cry of my people, and I am come down for their deliverance." The curse upon Cain at the end may well be regarded as expressing the revenge the writer felt in the inmost recesses of his heart, as an embodiment of that curse which he was ready to imprecate, and which his own vindictive hopes clothed with the terrors of the thunderbolt of divine retribution.

We may well suppose that the theology generated by such circumstances would partake of the same sternness of feeling. It renders reasonable much that we find afterwards, and which else would be inconsistent with the blander spirit which pervades some portions of these early records. It would be natural for those who were in a condition of slavery to vent their complaints in this indirect manner—to have recourse to ancient tradition, to work that tradition up for the purpose of allegory, and thus tell how their minds were rebelling against oppression, and how they anticipated their deliverance from it, and signal judgment upon their enemies. It is often thus that the traditions of religion act on the mind. Some years ago, when the death of Smith, the missionary at Demerara, through the violence of the planters, occasioned a long investigation into the conduct of the negroes who had attended his ministrations, one fact of this description was curiously prominent. It appeared that they understood little of his preaching or of his prayers; they gave most confused, imperfect, and discordant accounts of the doctrines he taught, or of the precepts and morals he enforced; but amid all this diversity, all this complexity and confusion, there was one thing which, when subjected to the examination of the council in that province, every negro slave remembered: they had heard him read from the book of Exodus those chapters which detail the oppression of the Israelites, and how they rose against their masters, went forth from them, triumphed over them, and achieved and enjoyed their freedom. And with sensations such as those with which the negro slave of modern times looked back to a narrative of this description, would the Jewish slaves look back to prior history; and if they found brother tyrannising over brother, and at length carrying it to the extent of slaughter, they would apply this to their own concerns; they would trace the obvious analogy which there was between the two cases; they would feel animated to call down Heaven's vengeance on their oppressors, as it had followed the crime of the first murderer; and thus would the theology arise which, in spite of all the moderation and wisdom of him whose ark had floated safely on the bulrushes, amid the waters of the Nile—in spite of all he could do for its mitigation, would a theology arise in which idolatry was

declared the most hateful crime, and in which the Deity said, "I will war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Thus much of the allegorical purpose of the narrative before us. I shall now take it in its literal meaning, and as it has been the subject of theological commentary and exposition. It begins with the commencement of the fourth chapter: "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord." The name Cain means "acquisition,"—a term not unhappily descriptive of the qualities which are afterwards developed—of that disposition of man towards grasping and aggrandisement, towards appropriation and selfism, which hardens him for deeds from which others recoil, and which enables him to go through the diversity of destiny which is afterwards described, and under which gentler natures would have been dismayed. "I have gotten a man from the Lord." The word "from" is introduced by the translators—a practice to which they not unfrequently resorted, instead of fairly grappling with the difficulties which they encountered. It reads literally, "I have gotten a man, the Lord;" and there are many men of high names, both in ancient and modern times, who think that Eve meant to describe her son as the Lord, as Jehovah, or the Deity,—supposing the promise of the incarnate Deity, the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head, to be already realised, and that this infant was the promised God in man that was to be the redeemer of the world. This exposition is only worth mentioning to show the length to which verbal and dogmatical criticism will be pushed when theologians have to deal with passages which, to answer their purpose, must be construed in defiance of all consistency and common sense. "And she again bare his brother Abel"—a term which means "vanity," "boast," or "vapour," and, with slight variation, "mourning." "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." This is one of the instances in which the writer has antedated the condition of human beings. One can scarcely suppose that the first family, the few individuals of which it was constituted, could have any reason, any inducement, to the laborious toils of agriculture, or that they needed to support any tame animals they wanted

to serve for food, or provide them with the means of clothing. The multitudes of animals gathering round them—the spontaneous fertility of the earth, yet in its first freshness—must have amply sufficed for their wants. But although this be the antedating of human occupation, yet it teaches a fact that corresponds with the soundest philosophical views. It is likely that the agricultural and pastoral life preceded the hunter's state, instead of following it, as it has been most commonly imagined by speculators on the early history of the world. The hunter's state is evidently a savage one, and it is one from which a tribe rarely, if indeed it ever, rises by its own energies. It seems not so much a natural condition of humanity, as a sinking of humanity below that condition—so far below it, as to take it out of the common law of progression. Pastoral tribes, agricultural tribes, are capable of civilisation and advancement. The addiction to these occupations has generally been one of the first steps towards forming a civil polity, towards organising a nation, towards winning for mankind some of those benefits which belong to the social tendencies of our being. But when these are abandoned—when men are compelled to rely for sustenance on the proceeds of the chase—we find them sinking into a state from which by themselves there is no redemption; and only the conquest of some powerful tribe over them gives them a chance of falling into the ranks, and taking their share in the great march of humanity.

"And in process of time"—or, according to the Hebrew, "at the end of days"—a phrase which theology has twisted to make it represent a weekly occurrence,—"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." Why this distinction should be made, we are not told. The offering of Cain was appropriate to his occupation, as that of Abel was to his. If between them we can draw any difference, it would surely be in favour of that bloodless offering which inflicted no pain. We can only find any solution, I think, in the circumstance to which I have just adverted, of the religious practices of the Egyptians and the

Jews, of the vegetable offerings of the Egyptian people, the animal offerings of the Jewish people, and of the laws afterwards established in reference to the Jewish nation. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says, that Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain, or something which was more of a sacrifice—that is, more in conformity with the subsequent Mosaic institutions, which that of Cain was not—thus resolving the whole into an arbitrary principle of distinction. "And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." We do not read that Abel was elated. With the simplicity of the pastoral character, we may imagine him as one of those who make their offering in the fulness of religious feeling, gratified in making it, and not desiring credit to be given to them for that which they are or that which they do. While Cain seems, in making his sacrifice, to be solicitous, in the first place, that it should be properly noticed, properly regarded and accepted, and that he should have all due honour, praise, blessing, and glory, for his conformity in this respect with the laws of religion.

"And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." The last phrase is an obscure expression, on which dogmatic theology has again fastened. It delights in the dark corners of the scriptures. It finds its food in whatever passages age or difference of manners may have rendered difficult or mysterious. Sin-offerings, according to the later Mosaic institutes, did not then exist. Probably it means no more than, "If thou hast not done well, guilt is imputed to thee." Dr. Geddes has found a more literal rendering: "If thou doest well, wilt thou not look up? wilt thou not have the generous and ennobling consciousness of one who has done no wrong? And if thou doest not well, wilt thou not look down? wilt thou not have a dejected and troubled countenance, indicative of that state of mind which is afraid of regarding humanity in the spirit of brotherhood?" "And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." That is, the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, with the non-acceptance of Cain's, does not interfere with the accustomed privilege of the first-born. In introducing such a circumstance as

this, however it may have served for the sustaining of his allegory, for the carrying on of his comparison between Cain and the Egyptians, and Abel and the Israelites, the writer has violated probability,—as the privilege of the elder brother could scarcely have been brought into discussion, when as yet there were but two brethren on the face of the whole earth. At the same time, we may as well take the writer's mention of this as the result of observations which there might be abundant ground for making, at the period in which he lived. It belongs to that grasping after earthly dignities, that aspiring towards the aristocratical condition of society, which manifested itself even in remote times, and in very early ages.

"And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" Throughout this familiar dialogue with the Deity, which in that very familiarity is an indication of the comparatively barbarous theological conceptions of the writer, the character of Cain is ably sustained. The equivocation—the renunciation of any immediate obligation upon him—the way in which he endeavours, first to evade, and then to procure the mitigation of, a sentence upon his crime—are all true to nature, that is, to natures of the kind of which he was the type. "And He said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth,"—from this earth, this land, this particular portion of the world in which Adam and his family dwelt,—"And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground"—this ground—"it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear:" a combination, in the same character, of the lowest grovelling with the extreme of ferocity being perfectly natural, and having been exhibited by individuals of this class on every occasion. "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth"—from this particular spot—from not only

the residence of Adam, but from what was taken by the writer to be the local residence of the Deity also—the Jehovah of this narrative being not the God dwelling in heaven, but one inhabiting this particular region. "And from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth: and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me." Again the antedating of the existence of men in different parts of the earth is observable. "And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him:" not, as frequently interpreted, a mark of punishment, but a mark or token of security. The purpose of it was to prevent Cain from being sacrificed by any avenger of blood—the writer overlooking the fact, that no such avenger of blood could be in existence, but regarding only the practices of later times. There has been much speculation on this mark. Some have supposed it a bodily disfigurement—some have represented it as the colour of the skin, supposing him to have been the parent of the African race, and thus finding a justification for their degradation and their oppression that exhibits much more of the spirit of Cain than that of Abel; whilst theology, as if anxious to defeat any indication of mercy and benignity in the record to which it applies, supposes his life only to have been preserved in order that it might be aggravated by the terrors of remorse, perpetuated throughout his life, and thus worse than death. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." Here the writer appropriately leaves Cain, occupying himself with the energy, the hardness, the bustle, which belong to such a character, and becoming a great regulator of the concerns of others. Enoch means "dedicated," or "disciplined"—perhaps an indication that in later life Cain would show himself, though he broke through moral obligations, a great enforcer among others of his own laws, regulations, and constitutions.

The religion of sacrifice—a religion whose dogmas often sacrifice reason, as its precepts and practices have often

sacrificed human feeling, and the best interests and enjoyments of humanity—the religion which has the notion of Divine vindictiveness for its basis, and vicarious suffering as its means of redemption from eternal torment—has thought to find here the type of that sanguinary proceeding by which it holds the sins of humanity to be expiated; it has sought here for indications of that sternness in the Creator which represents him as inaccessible to all the pleadings of mercy, and only acquitting offenders in his courts by the chicanery of a transfer of guilt and of virtue from one to another; it has sought here for the notion of sin-offerings, of Divine wrathfulness, and of the depravity of man, which it may weave together into that iron creed by which it rules over men's consciences, and restrains their lives. But even the speculations of minds like those of this writer, and their delineations of the Deity, were not adapted to become the materials for such a system; for here, as in the documents that go before, we find the Deity, however low and local his government may be represented, exercising mercy as well as justice; and in the case of Cain, with his transgression, as well as in that of Adam and Eve, there is an interposition of Divine benignity, which shows the Lord's ways of grace and goodness to be as far above men's ways as the heavens are above the earth.

The Deity of this narrative is, as I before said, Elohim—he inhabits a particular spot: there he holds communion and conversation with mortals; and banishment from that spot is being exiled from his face. The term Jehovah long designated in men's minds a being of this class, and far from the modern notions of God. It was by gradation, and by the efforts of such men as have been described, that this view was enlarged; and when the writer of the 139th Psalm asked, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there also"—he perhaps proclaimed what to many who read his production was a truth astounding for its originality. We find this contrast of ideas in the story narrated by the writer of the book of Jonah, who depicts the prophet as striving to fly from the presence of the Lord, as arrested in his flight by the storm, and told that the Deity he adored cared not only for Jerusalem but

for Nineveh also, and even for the cattle and beasts that dwelt within its walls.

The personal characters of Cain and Abel, so far as we can develop them from the narrative, or fill them up by what slight suggestions are there given, are in striking contrast. With the shepherd's life we associate notions of simplicity, of gentleness, of devotedness, of a contemplative and reflective life. We imagine one who gazes on the stars by night, and distributes them into constellations, forming among them pictures which are reflected in his own imagination, and hearing them raise their eternal songs of glory to their Creator—one to whom nature shows a familiar face, and a face that his heart learns to love—and who thus becomes a type of the poet, of the religious enthusiast, of all that is most simple, of all that is most gentle and forbearing, enduring and devoted, in humanity, and that prevails, by its very gentleness, over the sterner and stronger attributes of our nature. While in Cain we see that industrial energy, that aspiration, that desire for general recognition and appreciation, that hard ambition, which forms the sterner type of humanity.

In the confusion of notions, in the wide variety of creeds and forms, that distinguished the second, third, and fourth centuries of Christianity—there were sects which even took their appellation from these first brethren of the human race. There was the sect of Abelites, or Abelonites, who, looking with admiration on Abel's character, sympathising in his suffering, and combining in their version of the story some of the dark doctrines which disfigure theology in modern times, held even his murder to have been a blessing—thought it a portion of that blessing that he died childless—and held celibacy to be the duty of mortals, that beings might not be produced and trained in this world, only to manifest the depravity of nature, and be subject to eternal torment in the world to come. And we cannot but say that these enthusiasts reasoned more justly than have the multitude, on the principles which have been commonly held; for better were it that the human race should cease to be prolonged than that children should come into the world, as they are described by theology, with hearts totally alien from God and from goodness, and fit subjects only of sin and of endless suffering. There was also a class who called

themselves after Cain—Cainites, admirers of power; and they were better than some modern admirers of power, in that their appreciation was fairly and openly expressed by the title adopted. They thought Cain grander than Abel because he destroyed Abel, and they looked in the same way on the fabled heroes of the Old Testament. Nimrod was one of their favourites; and they even did homage to Judas, who, they said, was stronger than Christ, in betraying him to the priests.

There have always been idolaters of power, whose notions and feelings have coincided with these singular tenets—who have looked up to those who, by devastating countries, and staining their fields and rivers with blood, have created a name, and made themselves great in the oppression and wretchedness of their fellow-creatures. Well were it if such odious opinions were always expressed with equal frankness! In truth, the strife between the two types of humanity is a continuous one. The dispositions which they prefigure may, in their combination, be essential to that progress in knowledge, in goodness, and in enjoyment, which, under the guidance of Providence, is the destiny of our nature; but it is to the eventual triumph of the milder one that we are to look for the amelioration of our species and of our condition. There are presages to be traced from the earliest time that such a period will arrive. Abel, the offerer of a sacrifice to God which met with acceptance, and who perished beneath the force of fratricidal Cain,—Abel's blood spoke from the ground, and Heaven heard its voice. The religion of Abel, gradually purified from the gloom and vindictiveness that had gathered round it, was destined to be perpetuated and to triumph in the world. The time soon came, which even the writer and allegoriser of the narrative did not anticipate as he looked around, and thought of the sacrifices that the Egyptians would not allow them to offer,—the time came when the temple of Jerusalem rose in its splendour—when the glory of the Lord abode in the ark of the covenant—when offerings, commensurate with the grandeur of the nation in whose name they were brought, filled with their smoke and their incense that mighty temple, whence, in conformity with the peculiarity of the Hebrew ritual, the morning and evening orisons of a united people ascended. And at length came He whose blood spake better things

than that of Abel—He whose mission was to redeem religion from the evils and grossnesses which had accumulated around it—who taught men to worship in spirit and in truth the God of universal humanity; and He too was made a sacrifice. If his blood was shed, the spirit of his religion went forth into the world, telling men that they were all of one blood, and that it was the will of their heavenly Father that they should dwell on the earth as brethren. Thus was it even in the conflicts of heathenism. In Greece, Æschylus won the sympathies of the human heart for the sufferings of the Titan who had brought good for humanity even by offending the gods; and, although there was the doom of the rock and of the vulture, yet men's thoughts were excited, their feelings were linked with the oppressed, and not with the oppressor; until the fabled dominion of Jove passed away from the earth, and became a mere tale of ancient times.

The spirit of acquisition, which is the meaning of the word Cain—the spirit of acquisition, of priestcraft, of aristocracy, of distinction, of ambition, and of worldliness—has always adhered to the hardness and persecution and corruption of religion; while, in the dictates of gentle natures, in the emotions of the common heart of humanity, and in the poetical spirit of true religion, has been found the counteracting force that, working quietly and silently, has yet in due time always sufficed to obtain its appropriate triumph. Churches have ever shown themselves, as their worldly power has been consolidated, inclined to the spirit of Cain rather than to that of Abel. In how many ways, unrebuked, have religion and commerce and legislation reënacted the tragedy of that first field of human slaughter! Whenever warfare has spread abroad its terrors—whenever the conqueror has reaped his ensanguined laurels—whenever the celebrations, whether of the poet, or of the historian, or of popular applause, have had respect simply to military achievements, without regard to whatever can alone redeem those achievements from the charge of crime,—then, again and again, has Heaven repeated, "The voice of thy brothers' blood crieth to me from the ground." Whenever the commercial spirit, disregarding aught but gain, has pursued its course,—invading the dictates of justice, trampling upon the claims of the labourer, making man himself the object of traffic, buying and selling those who

were merely distinguished from others by the colour of their skin, and wringing from them the utmost pecuniary value of their bones and muscles,—again has their cry been heard, again has the voice of their blood ascended from the ground to Heaven. Through all the stages of religious persecution—through all the sanguinary struggles in support of what are deemed the vested rights of ecclesiastical corporations to tyrannise over conscience—through all the administrations of justice in which human life is disregarded, and vindictiveness takes the place of that reformatory discipline by which society should seek to secure itself and correct offenders,—in these manifestations, which from time to time are presented to our eyes and sadden our hearts, the voice of our brothers' blood crieth from the ground to Heaven. And let it cry, till its voice is heard by humanity as well as by the Deity, and until the spirit of Abel assumes the supremacy which mere force for a time made the possession of the spirit of Cain—till lost is the power of priestcraft, of tyranny, of every kind of hard and grinding domination of man over man. The dictates of human feeling, the incorporate spirit of poetry and humanity in religion, are as suffering Abel, whose blood may be shed again and again; but it does not render barren the land on which it is shed, as it is said to have done in that olden story. It fertilises that spot, causes its beauty and its fruit and its richness to spring up even for the oppressor and for the murderer himself, and at length prepares for him a flowery and inviting path by which his steps may retrace the way to the very gates of paradise,—for those gates are no longer closed or guarded by the fiery sword of the cherubs, but open to all who return thither; while the tree of knowledge is no longer inhibited, and the tree of life bears its fruit in richness, with its very leaves for the healing of the nations.

ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY AND MODERN THEOLOGY.

June 24th, 1838.

The subject of the present lecture is, the principles which are common to the mythologies of antiquity and to the theology of modern times. I had occasion, in the course of last year, to lecture on the analogy between ancient idolatries and modern vices, and there is between them a curious and striking parallel. Almost every absurdity which in ancient and barbarous times was consecrated and elevated into the rank of a religion, in modern times continues to exist, but finds its sphere of influence in action rather than in speculation, in conduct rather than in theory.

The gods of antiquity were enthroned despots—they were worshiped as girt about with the insignia and splendour of regality, as regality then existed. If such descriptions of Deity have ceased to be common, we find them replaced by the servility that bends to station—by what may be called the idolatry of rank and power—by the servile homage which is paid, not merely to the individuals who are elevated above their fellow-creatures for social and political purposes, but to the very stations themselves, considered, as it were, apart from their possessors.

We every where trace in the mythologies of antiquity a disposition to render honour to partisan gods, deities of tribes, deities of countries, whose influence and whose energies, whatever may have been imagined as to their nature and extent, were only exerted on behalf of this or that class of human beings, whilst towards other classes, whether distinguished by descent or by country, they entertained all the fierceness and hostility which one set of men cherished towards another set of men. In modern times, more

enlarged conceptions of divine government, with greater recognition of the unity of supernatural power, have by no means worn out this feeling; for partisanship and sectarianism enter into the very essence of the notions of religion which are generally received: and if there be but one Deity recognised now, that Deity is appealed to by conflicting nations and conflicting parties—he is invoked to give success to their struggles for proselytism—he is made to share their feelings of bigotry and condemnation—or he is implored by those who are marshalled under hostile banners to give victory to their arms, and to render them triumphant in the destruction of their antagonists.

We found, in antiquity, beings honoured as deities who claimed the sacrifice even of infants at their altars—child-destroying deities—the Molochs of a barbarous superstition, whom men thought to propitiate by making burnt sacrifices of their offspring; and now,—in a state of civilisation in which practices like these are held in the utmost abhorrence, in which every term of reprobation is heaped on them,—are there not child-destroying tendencies, which exercise a Moloch-like power over education, and, instead of training up the young in clear, enlarged, strong, and liberal views,—instead of bringing the human spirit to full maturity, and sending it forth rejoicing in its free course, —immolate it at the altar of worldly interest, overload its faculties with merely conventional learning, giving it a training that is to secure its best position, or what is apprehended to be so, in reference to the external good things of this life, to the neglect of spiritual life, and of the best prospects of the noblest powers of human beings?

It was observed that, amongst barbarous nations, fetich-worship prevails much—that of individual deities, every man having his own god. In many parts of Africa, and among many of the American Indians, whatever object is first beheld—stone, bird, or serpent—becomes a sacred emblem to the individual through life—becomes, in his imagination, his own peculiar, appropriate, protecting deity—and, as such, leads him to have something that is peculiar to himself in the religion that he holds and in the worship that he practises. And what but a kind of fetich-worship is the spirit of selfism that now abounds—the grasping, appropriating spirit, which desires

ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY AND MODERN THEOLOGY.

June 24th, 1838.

The subject of the present lecture is, the principles which are common to the mythologies of antiquity and to the theology of modern times. I had occasion, in the course of last year, to lecture on the analogy between ancient idolatries and modern vices, and there is between them a curious and striking parallel. Almost every absurdity which in ancient and barbarous times was consecrated and elevated into the rank of a religion, in modern times continues to exist, but finds its sphere of influence in action rather than in speculation, in conduct rather than in theory.

The gods of antiquity were enthroned despots—they were worshiped as girt about with the insignia and splendour of regality, as regality then existed. If such descriptions of Deity have ceased to be common, we find them replaced by the servility that bends to station—by what may be called the idolatry of rank and power—by the servile homage which is paid, not merely to the individuals who are elevated above their fellow-creatures for social and political purposes, but to the very stations themselves, considered, as it were, apart from their possessors.

We every where trace in the mythologies of antiquity a disposition to render honour to partisan gods, deities of tribes, deities of countries, whose influence and whose energies, whatever may have been imagined as to their nature and extent, were only exerted on behalf of this or that class of human beings, whilst towards other classes, whether distinguished by descent or by country, they entertained all the fierceness and hostility which one set of men cherished towards another set of men. In modern times, more

enlarged conceptions of divine government, with greater recognition of the unity of supernatural power, have by no means worn out this feeling; for partisanship and sectarianism enter into the very essence of the notions of religion which are generally received: and if there be but one Deity recognised now, that Deity is appealed to by conflicting nations and conflicting parties—he is invoked to give success to their struggles for proselytism—he is made to share their feelings of bigotry and condemnation—or he is implored by those who are marshalled under hostile banners to give victory to their arms, and to render them triumphant in the destruction of their antagonists.

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to clutch every thing; to say of whatever good it can see or appreciate, "it is mine;" and that would build up individual advantage on the ruins of all social good and of every social principle?

The parallel was concluded by observing, that one power has arisen in modern times, which can scarcely be equalled in the annals of antiquity, and which is mightier than all—the money god, whom millions worship; the power which makes thrones its altars—which makes of churches marts, of halls of legislation and of justice temples, for the purposes of its idolatry—whose litany or ritual is to be found in perverted forms of religion, or of social and political arrangements, which celebrate its praise and glory—and whose universal preëminence is manifested in the demoralisation of nations.

But it is not merely in the vices of modern times that the idolatries of antiquity have left their influence. Their principles are perpetuated in what we hold sacred, as well as in what we deem profane. They are to be found in our religions as well as in our vices. The serpent that is said in the mythos to have caused the desolation and sterility of the earth,—to have made it cursed as connected with the toil of humanity, and to have caused it to bear thorns and briers to repay its exertions,—is also said to have left his trail upon the flowers and fruits of paradise; and that which should be the resource of misery, in its utter abandonment and distress—that which should be the strength of weakness, when struggling with temptation—that which should be the aspiration of hope, when the mind would look through the clouds by which it is surrounded, and be cheered by the prospect of the sunshine that should yet beam upon the world,—has too often been only the occasion of perversion, of feebleness, and of degradation; while ever, where this has not been the case, imperfections have been perpetuated, errors have been consecrated, that might have rectified themselves if they had been left to themselves; and from an indisposition correctly to trace the history of opinion, and thoroughly to develop the grounds of belief, much has remained which constitutes a sort of identity between the mythologies of antiquity, notwithstanding their absurdity, and the prevalent theology of modern times, notwithstanding its many superiorities.

It may seem difficult at first to say what were the common principles of the ancient mythologies,—they were so varied, so interminably multifarious; they followed so many guidances, and were subject to so many influences. The mythology of the remote East in the earliest times was mythical tradition, cherished recollections of the patriarchs, of the flood, of the destruction of the human race, of the ark that floated upon the waters, of him and his three sons who were saved therein to repeople the earth, of the rainbow that gladdened them as they descended from their place of refuge to inhabit that soil which was now their sole and common property. We find these exhibited in processions; we find them consecrated in mysteries; we find them typified in emblems, and apparently, under some circumstances, constituting the very essence of the religion which was professed. In other circumstances, as in Egypt, we see a mythology whose chief character is emblematic; or which, where it is direct, offers its homage at once to the powers of nature, to objects presented to the senses in heaven and earth, —the worship of various kinds of animals or of plants, each being selected to represent to the senses some mental or spiritual attribute, some principle or power, diffused invisibly through nature, and operating to the production of the successive phenomena that the earth presents, and the fruits which it bears for man's service; or, as in Chaldea, the worship of the stars themselves, as they shone in glory in their spheres, shedding down their supposed influences upon all human things. As we glance towards Greece, we perceive the influence of an artistic constitution and of free political institutions generating hero-worship, enshrining gods in human form, investing them with human attributes, mental and moral, as well as with the most exquisite representations of the physical formation of humanity, and thus presenting to us an altogether different appearance, in which, at first, we can trace little that is in common with the older superstitions that were displaced by its prevalence. In Rome, we see the military tendencies and propensities of the people, and their love of institution and of order, exhibited in the deities to whom they paid their adoration; and nowhere was incense so lavishly poured forth, or the flame so often enkindled, as upon the altar

of Victory in their capitol. While in the darker northern regions, then in a state of comparative barbarism, we find the supernatural beings that were venerated participating in the then character of the country and people—gods of wilderness and of mountain, of field and of forest—often resembling in their attributes the demons of a different religion, with whom they were afterwards identified. But still, in all this variety, there is something that, if it were not absolutely universal, yet generally prevailed. We find in all the notion of a divine essence, numerously participated. These gods, in all their diversities, and in their number, which was sometimes multiplied to thousands and tens of thousands, yet were partakers of one common supposed divine nature. This nature Egyptian idolatry incorporated with the animals that it adored. Into the possession of this nature the Greeks supposed their heroes to enter when they were raised to the rank of demigods. This nature the theistic systems of antiquity, and very early indeed the pantheistic systems that showed themselves in the world, supposed to be identified with whatever exists, animate or inanimate, conscious or unconscious. This was the nature which shone forth in those who, by descent, claimed to belong to their sacred hierarchy, and who, from having been kings of nations and founders of states, became their patron gods, their representatives, as it were, in the courts of the deities, agents for the promotion of their prosperity and for the establishment and perpetuation of their glory. We find, for instance, in the legends of Rome, that the fabulous founder of the city had divine descent claimed for him, and was raised to a participation of its privileges at his death. I quote a portion of the legend of Romulus, as given in a work recently published by Dr. Arnold on the History of Rome—a work eminently deserving study by all who would not merely acquaint themselves with the truth of history as to that interesting people, but who would perceive how legend and authentic record have hitherto been mingled in their annals, and would see one separated from the other, presenting its distinct form and invested with its peculiar character. He gives this as what was probably the original legend of the story of the death of Romulus: "Romulus was a just king, and gentle to his people; if any were guilty of crimes, he did not put them

to death, but made them pay a fine of sheep or of oxen. In his wars he was very successful, and enriched his people with the spoils of their enemies. At last, after he had reigned nearly forty years, it chanced that one day he called his people together in the field of Mars, near the Goats' Pool: when, all on a sudden, there arose a dreadful storm, and all was as dark as night; and the rain and thunder and lightning were so terrible, that all the people fled from the field, and ran to their several homes. At last the storm was over, and they came back to the field of Mars; but Romulus was nowhere to be found,—for Mars, his father, had carried him up to heaven in his chariot. The people knew not at first what was become of him; but when it was night, as one Proculus Julius was coming from Alba to the city, Romulus appeared to him in more than mortal beauty, and grown to more than mortal stature, and said to him, 'Go and tell my people that they weep not for me any more; but bid them to be brave and warlike: and so shall they make my city the greatest in the earth.' Then the people knew that Romulus was become a god; so they built a temple to him, and worshiped him evermore by the name of the god Quirinus."*

Thus was humanity elevated, partly in virtue of its supposed descent, into participation of the one divine nature. The opposite to this—the incarnation of the divine nature in humanity—is continually presented to us in the legends of Hindostan; and while we thus find the one divine nature numerously participated in, we also find a tendency towards the peculiar elevation of a triad of persons as eminently its possessors. We find this in the Bramah, the Vishnu, and the Siva of the Hindoo; in the Isis, the Osiris, and the Horus of the Egyptian; in the Jupiter, the Neptune, and the Pluto of the Greek mythology: and thus over all the ancient world there prevailed that notion of a plurality of persons in the one divine essence—that notion of a triad, or trinity, of persons invested with the same divine attributes, and in possession of this one divine nature—which shows itself in what is called the orthodoxy of modern Christianity, which is still upheld, which is still the notion of a great majority of the people of the world—this plurality in unity, of which the

* Arnold, *History of Rome*, vol. i. c. i. p. 11; 4th edit., 1845.

as victims to their gods, and according to which our own ancestors are said to have destroyed human beings, even in great numbers, in the most cruel manner, in order to propitiate the dark oppressors whom they adored. Nay, we even find it systematised: and Bryant, in his discussions on ancient mythology, gives a curious specimen of a Phœnician sacrifice, to which he is disposed to attach much of mystical meaning. "I have shown," he says, "that the most approved sacrifices among the Phœnicians were those of men: yet even among these they made a difference, and some were in greater repute than others. Many times they offered human victims indiscriminately, and without choice. At other times they selected their own children, and the most beloved of their children; which was supposed to be a most acceptable offering. But the greatest refinement in these cruel rites was when the prince of the country, or a chief person in any city, brought his only son to the altar, and there slaughtered him, by way of atonement, to avert any evil from the people. This last was properly the *mystical sacrifice.*"*

He then tells the legend of the god Kronus, who sacrificed his own son, and traces it through a good many difficulties of interpretation to these results: "I have been obliged to take these pains, in order to determine who the deity was whom the Phœnicians are supposed to have copied in this particular; and, at the same time, to show that nothing could have preceded for them to imitate; but what they did was a type and a presentation of something to come. It is the only instance of any sacrifice in the Gentile world which is said to be mystical, and it is attended with circumstances which are very extraordinary. *Kronus*, we find, was the same as *El*, and *Elioun*. He is, moreover, said to have had the *Elohim* for his coadjutors. He had no father to make any offering to: for he was the father of all, and termed *Lord of heaven* by the confession of the author by whom the account is given. These sacrifices, therefore, had no reference to any thing past, as I have before mentioned; but alluded to a great event to be accomplished afterwards. They were instituted probably in consequence of a prophetic tradition, which, I imagine, had

* Bryant, *System of Ancient Mythology*, vol. vi. p. 325; 3d edit., 1807.

been preserved in the family of Esau, and transmitted through his posterity to the people of Canaan. The account is, to be sure, mixed with much extraneous matter, and has been dressed up and adapted to the Grecian taste. But let us make some allowance for the colouring, and divest it, as far as we can, of fable; and we may possibly arrive at the truth which is concealed beneath. The mystical sacrifice of the Phœnicians had these requisites, —that a prince was to offer it, and his only son was to be the victim: and, as I have shown that this could not relate to any thing prior, let us consider what is said upon the subject as future, and attend to the consequence. For if the sacrifice of the Phœnicians was a type of another to come, the nature of this last will be known from the representation by which it was prefigured. According to this, *El*, the supreme deity, whose associates were the *Elohim*, was in process of time to have a son, well beloved, his only-begotten; who was to be conceived, as some render it, of grace, but, according to my interpretation, of the fountain of light. He was to be called *Jeoud*, whatever that name may relate to; and to be offered up as a sacrifice to his father, by way of satisfaction and redemption, to atone for the sins of others, and avert the just vengeance of God; to prevent universal corruption, and, at the same time, general ruin. And it is further remarkable, he was to make this grand sacrifice invested with the emblems of royalty. These, surely, are very strong expressions; and the whole is an aggregate of circumstances highly significant, which cannot be the result of chance. All that I have requested to be allowed me in the process of this recital is this simple supposition, that this mystical sacrifice was a type of something to come: how truly it corresponds to that which I imagine it alludes to, I submit to the reader's judgment. I think it must necessarily be esteemed a most wonderful piece of history."*

The principles which are here involved, and the manner in which those principles have been identified with theological doctrines in modern times, need only be adverted to; not merely the similarity, but the absolute identity, must be evident to every hearer. The notion of propitiation, of vicarious suffering, the great pervading element of

* Bryant, *System of Ancient Mythology*, vol vi. p. 320 *et seq.*

the old mythology, is also the very vitality of what, by thousands and millions, is called Christianity at the present time. The Egyptians, among others,—although, in the times to which I had occasion to advert in the last lecture, they only offered vegetable sacrifices,—seem at some periods, overleaping the intermediate step of animal victims, to have had recourse to human immolations; and there is a circumstance connected with this, and with their annual celebration of the rising of the waters of the Nile, which is told in the *Universal History*, and which applies to our present purpose: "In former times the Egyptians used annually at this ceremony to sacrifice a girl, or, as others say, a boy and a girl, to the Nile, as a tribute paid to that river for all the benefits they received from it. And this inhuman custom continued till the Turks made themselves masters of Egypt; when their first governor, resolved to abolish it, by his prudent remonstrances prevailed on the Egyptians to lay it aside: but the river, unfortunately, did not rise that year to the accustomed height. The year following, it was still worse; so the people, apprehending a famine, began to murmur: whereupon the governor led all the inhabitants of the city, Turks, Jews, and Christians, to a mountain on the east of Al Kâhira, and, after a pathetic exhortation, obliged all that were present to offer up their prayers to God for obtaining his mercy; in which exercise they passed all the rest of the day and the following night. Next morning, before day, some women came, with great joy, to acquaint the governor that the Nile had risen in the night no less than twelve pikes; then nothing was heard but the praises of God, and acclamations of the people. Coming down from the mountain, they erected an altar at the mouth of the canal ten feet high, whereon they threw a great quantity of flowers and a branch of olive, which last, as they say, took root there, as a more agreeable offering to God than the former innocent victim. They continue still to erect such an altar every year; and when they break down the dam, and the water enters the Khalîj, it carries down the altar and flowers with it. In the year when this event happened, the Nile rose two pikes higher than usual, and this extraordinary rise was attended with extraordinary plenty; since which time, a final stop being put to the above-mentioned inhuman practice, whenever

the waters fail of their accustomed height, they have recourse to prayers on the same mountain."*

Unhappily, in modern theology, the idea of propitiation, founded on the principles of vindictive justice, and involving even an act of arbitrary immolation by a paternal Deity, has not yet disappeared from men's faith. The altar bearing only fruits and flowers, the produce of the earth, in thankfulness to the Bestower of those gifts, has not yet been erected; nor that olive planted, the emblem of peace between God and man, between faith and reason, between the dictates of religion and the emotions of the human heart, which we hope will one day strike its roots deeply and flourish.

Now, in tracing these three general principles—of plurality in the divine essence, of particular interposition in the divine government, and of vicariousness in the propitiating of the Deity—we have traced the outline of what still passes for religion, of what is held up to the world as preeminently religion and Christianity. It is not that they are false principles—by no means; every truth has some particular phase in which it harmonises with falsehood, and every prevalent falsehood has in it some germ of truth, which it is well worth while to detect, to elucidate, and to contemplate. I believe, rather than false principles, we should term them imperfect and erring developments of universal ideas—of ideas which are sure to commend themselves to the human mind, which grasp that mind, which will make good their hold upon it in some form or other: and the real evil is, when governments, when churches, when sects and establishments, when bigotry and prejudice, interpose, and prevent the natural advancement of the human mind from that mode of contemplating such ideas which belongs only to a barbarous condition, to that mode of contemplating them which belongs to a refined and civilised state; the evil is, in arresting the course of thought at some particular point where it belongs only to a particular stage of mental progress: avoid this, and all will go on in its natural and its most beneficent course.

No doubt the notion of the divine unity is more true than the boundless plurality of divinity which ancient times

* *Universal History*, vol. i. c. iii. p. 172; 1779.

contemplated, and which, in a varied form, is still consecrated in modern times. But yet that notion of the divine unity which alienates, which isolates, the Deity from his works; which erects two great principles of being, separate and in some respects inharmonious, spiritual and material; which does not see God in all his works, and all his works in him, —this notion seems to me, though nearer the truth, yet to be only another stage in our advance along the same journey which, as it began with presenting numerous deities to human contemplation, may at last rest in the identification of the Creator with his visible emanations. And so, though the notion of the government of the world by general laws has more truth in it than the mere notion of a set of independent and preternatural interpositions, yet this too is but an imperfect view of the truth. There is no power in a law of nature—there is nothing inherent and essentially universal in the material sequence of cause and effect. When philosophy has advanced from the notion that religion first entertained of government by mere interposition to the idea of government by laws, it has yet another stage to advance, and that is, to contemplate all laws but as modes of divine operation. The power of priesthoods, the influence of priestcraft,—these were but a perversion of that veneration for superiority which it is the tendency of man's nature, and the privilege of his constitution, to feel; of that reverence which might first direct itself to superiority of physical strength, which may then have fixed upon station, which may have been misled and perverted by superstition, and the mighty power that hierarchies have possessed and exercised; but which at last, in the recognition of mental and moral superiority, as that superiority is possessed by individual minds, finds the only efficient lever for raising the great mass of humanity, and for teaching men to aspire by the contemplation of that which is above them. And even the vicarious notion may be so purified and rationalised—striking its roots into the human heart, it may grow up with so much of truth and beauty in its development—as to take from it whatever of disgust may have sometimes been raised by its contemplation. One of the most interesting orthodox writers of the present day, the author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, maintains in that work that the vicarious principle is characteristic of all Christian

benevolence; and he thus states and reasons on the assumption:

"That great principle of vicarious suffering, which forms the centre of Christianity, spreads itself through the subordinate parts of the system, and is the pervading, if not the invariable, law of Christian beneficence. . . . . And this is the law of success in the Christian ministry, that highest work of philanthropy. Every right-minded and heaven-commissioned minister of religion is 'baptised with the baptism wherewith his Lord was baptised.' In an inferior, yet a real sense, he is, like his Lord, a vicarious person, and has freely undergone a suretyship for the immortal welfare of his fellow-men. He has charged himself with a responsibility that can never be absolutely acquitted while any power of exertion or faculty of endurance is held back from the service. The interests which rest in his hand, and depend on his skill and fidelity,—depend as truly as if divine agency had no part in the issue,—are as momentous as infinity can make them; nor are they to be promoted without a willingness to do and to bear the utmost of which humanity is capable. Although the servant of Christ be not unconditionally responsible for the happy result of his labours, he is clearly bound, both by the terms of his engagement and the very quality of the work, to surrender whatever he may possess that has in it a virtue to purchase success; and he knows that, by the great law of the spiritual world, the suffering of a substitute enters into the procedures of redemption.

"He who 'took our sorrows and bore our griefs' left for the instruction of his servants a perfect model of what should ordinarily be a life of beneficence. Every circumstance of privation, of discouragement, of insult, of deadly hostility, which naturally fell in the way of a ministry like his, exercised among a people profligate, malignant, and fanatical, was endured by him as submissively as if no extraordinary powers of relief or defence had been at his disposal. On the very same conditions of unmitigated toil and suffering he consigned the publication of his religion to his apostles: 'Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. Whosoever killeth you shall think that he doeth God service. Behold I send you forth as sheep among wolves.' . . . . Nor have the conditions of

eminent service been relaxed; the value of souls is not lowered; and as the 'sacrifice once offered' for the sins of the world remains in undiminished efficacy, so, in the process of diffusing the infinite benefit, the rule originally established continues in force; and although reasons drawn from the diversity of character and of natural strength among those who are the servants of God may occasion great apparent differences in the amount of suffering severally endured by them, it is always true that the path of Christian beneficence is more beset than the common walks of life with disheartening reverses. Whoever freely takes up the cause of the wretched, is left to feel the grievous pressure of the burden. The frustration of his plans by the obstinate folly of those whom he would fain serve; the apathy, the remissness, or the sinister oppositions of professed coadjutors; the dangerous hostility of profligate power; and, worse than all, the secret misgivings of an exhausted spirit,—these, and whatever other instruments of torture disappointment may hold in her hand or have in reserve, are the furniture of the theatre on which the favourite virtue of Heaven is to pass its trial" (sect. vii. pp. 144-148; 1844).

He supposes that the course of philanthropic exertion is so beset with difficulties and with disappointments as to turn back the mere enthusiast. But, though not to our present purpose, I cannot refrain from quoting the conclusion of this section, in which he supposes individual minds rising above those discouragements, and reaping from them their appropriate amount of good:

"And yet, not seldom, a happy renovation of motives takes place in consequence of the very failures to which the enthusiast has exposed himself. Benevolent enterprises were commenced, perhaps, in all the fervour of exorbitant hopes; the course of nature was to be diverted, and a new order of things to take place, in which what human efforts failed to accomplish should be achieved by the ready aid of Heaven. But disappointment, as merciless to the venial errors of the good as to the mischievous plots of the wicked, scatters the project in a moment. Then the selfish and the inert exult; and the half-wise pick up fragments from the desolation, wherewith to patch their favourite maxims of frigid prudence with new proofs in point. Meanwhile, by

grace given from above in the hour of despondency, the enthusiast gains a portion of true wisdom from defeat. Though robbed of his fondly cherished hopes, he has not been stripped of his sympathies, and these soon prompt him to begin anew his labours, on principles of a more substantial sort. Warned not again to expect miraculous or extraordinary aids to supply the want of caution, he consults prudence with even a religious scrupulosity; for he has learned to think her voice, if not misunderstood, to be, in fact, the voice of God. And now he avenges himself upon disappointment by abstaining almost from hope. A sense of responsibility, which quells physical excitement, is his strength. He relies, indeed, upon the divine aid; yet not for extraordinary interpositions, but for grace to be faithful. Thus better furnished for arduous exertions, a degree of substantial success is granted to his renewed toils and prayers. And while the indolent, and the over-cautious, and the cold-hearted, remain what they were—or have become more inert, more timid, and more selfish than before—the subject of their self-complacent pity has not only accomplished some important service for mankind, but has himself acquired a temper which fits him to take rank among the thrones and dominions of the upper world" (sect. vii. p. 150).

The vicarious principle, thus interpreted,—thus brought within the range of human sympathies, and human feelings and motives,—sheds back its reflected light upon the dogma from which the writer, and those who think with him, have deduced it; it takes from such dogmas most of their sting and repulsiveness; it shows, if this be what is meant, that what presents itself to us in the guise of disgusting falsehood may yet bear within some outline and feature of heavenly truth; it indicates that it may be only one stage in the progress of the human mind from the selfishness that ever thrives most with ignorance, to the beneficence that, looking abroad on a world where ignorance and sorrow abound, takes that load of ignorance and sorrow, as it were, upon its own humble heart, bears the burden by the very strength of its desire for the removal of the plague, and thus qualifies itself, as is here described, to become God's agent for lessening the amount of human suffering, and augmenting the extent of human enjoyment.

Here, then, is the mischief of creeds and sects and estab-

lishments. They enshrine the notion of a time in what they endeavour to make a permanent form; that which is only one of the phases of human thought and feeling, they impose on all. Religion thus treated becomes mere words, it generates hypocrisy, it descends into superstition, it glows into fanaticism, it excites all the bigotry and selfishness of the human mind, and shows that the laws of human nature can never be warred against with impunity—that to struggle against them is only to stop our own advance in the road to happiness, and to surround ourselves with feelings that can only be tormenting to those by whom they are cherished, because they are opposed to the constitution of the human mind. That is the charge—whether against the nation that enshrines faith in its royal decrees or its acts of parliament, or whether against the church or sect that would perpetuate its creed from age to age, and make faith the condition of its communion. That is the charge against all who wish to impose their own notions upon others—who are intolerant to those who entertain diversity of opinion—who cannot perceive differences, especially in one direction, without uttering sentences of condemnation, or of suspicion and doubt, as to those by whom such different opinions are cherished.

This is not the state of mind in which religion is best promoted. Little as we can know of God—imperfectly as, at best, must be developed those ideas which constitute the pillars of religion—our most profitable course is to confess ignorance where we feel it; to acquire more knowledge on any one of those topics, as opportunity may offer, and from whatever source; to look complacently on while others are pursuing a similar course, although it may lead them to the widest divergence of opinion from ourselves; to believe that there is something paramount to all opinion, namely, the disposition to aspire after more acquaintance with the Spirit that pervades universal being, and which really constitutes religion in the mind and heart of man. Would that religion were let alone—let alone by the power of kings and parliaments—let alone by the creeds and forms of sects and churches—and let alone by bigotry, by superstition, by the exclusiveness of individual professors! Then the ideas of God, of justice, of moral government, of immortality, of hope, and worship,

and happiness, would gradually advance in the human mind,—they would grow, as the science of astronomy, or any other science, has grown up, in human thought, experiment, and discovery,—they would flourish there, until they presented religion, not girt with terrors or enfolded in the clouds of ancient superstition or modern dogma, but with all her loveliness,—heaven's rainbow her celestial diadem—the flowers springing up beneath her footsteps—the objects of nature, in all their variety and grandeur, her sole altar of worship—"Glory to God in the highest," her song —"Peace on earth," her benediction—"Good will among men," her work—and her promise, that of interminable being, with never-ending progression in goodness and in happiness.

THE SEVEN AGES OF CHRISTIANITY.

No. I.

July 29th, 1838.

The subject of the present lecture, and of one or two to follow, is the Seven Ages of Christianity; and I intend what I have to introduce in connection with this topic as in some measure supplemental to the lecture some time ago delivered on the Three Ideas of Christianity.* For topics of this kind, any fact, any opinion, any science, any form of government, any religion, indeed, will admit of being viewed either analytically or historically—that is, we may either take it as it exists at a given period, we may lay it out into its very elemental portions, we may scrutinise every particular which goes to make up its entire composition, we may mark their mutual adaptation, and see how they combine into one whole; or, we may note its growth, from its first and germinal state, through all the gradations of its progressive advance, until it appears in full maturity, or until it declines and passes away from the catalogue of organised being.

We may apply this to any object in nature. According to the one process, we should note, if it were an oak-tree, its stem, and branches, and leaves, and blossoms, and fruit—we should obtain a chemical analysis of its composition, we should distinguish its bark from the wood which it surrounds and protects, observe the vessels through which the sap circulates; and thus arrive at some conception of its general organisation, and of the particular functions of particular portions of its substance. Or we might, on the other hand, trace its history from the time when the acorn was deposited in the ground by the hand of the planter, or dropt there from a parent tree—we might observe it through

* See vol. vii. p. 283.

all its progress, striking its root and putting up its tender stem, growing perhaps at first securely under the shade of some more short-lived production, which it was destined long to survive and flourish over—we might see it stretching out its mighty branches, raising high and spreading wide its ample foliage, giving its refreshing shade to man and beast; and then beginning to decay, and gradually losing the substance and firmness which had once made it the monarch of the woods, until at length it declines and moulders away into the very earth by which it had been so long sustained.

Or we might apply both these modes of procedure to a book—to the Bible, for instance. In the one case, we should separate it into its different characteristics of history, of poetry, of controversy, of moral precept, of religious exhortation and devotion, and of prediction. In the other, we should note the date of its various productions—we should trace them back in their long series from the remotest times to the most recent works—we should endeavour to ascertain the authors or compilers by whom existing arrangements had been made, and advert to the authority by which the process of selection was guided, and in consequence of whose decree some works were placed there, while others were rejected; and then note its influence over the successive generations of men, its effect on their thoughts and feelings, their actions and expectations. In the combination of these processes of investigation, we cannot fail to acquire a more distinct view of any such subject, natural or moral, than we can by merely having recourse to one or other of them separately.

This, then, I will do with Christianity; and as we have analysed it into three different conceptions, the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, and the Philosophical—as we have seen how, in each of these, there is a different conception of what constitutes Christianity—how it is in the first case a system of spiritual government for the salvation of men's souls by the agency of the priesthood—how, in the second conception, it is a revelation of the abstract truth of propositions which men are to receive, which they form into creeds, on which they exercise their intellects, and by which they make their sectarian demarcations—and how, in the third, or philosophical view of it, it is a system of moral

training by which Providence leads on a people to become the instructors of the rest of the world,—as in this view we gain a more distinct apprehension of Christianity itself,—so may we also by looking at it historically as well as analytically, and by noting the different phases which it has assumed in different ages. And in these phases, there are in Christianity, as in the life of man, seven gradations, that may be distinctly noted; although they do not in the one case, as in the other, lead us through what may be regarded as a complete scale of being, commencing with feebleness and helplessness, and terminating with dissolution.

The Seven Ages of Christianity are, first, that of anticipatory Christianity; the second, the Christianity of Christ; the third, apostolic Christianity; the fourth, persecuted Christianity; the fifth, triumphant Christianity; the sixth, political and sectarian Christianity; and the seventh, the Christianity of futurity. The first two of these are all to which I shall advert on the present occasion.

Whatever may be thought of the contents of Tindal's book entitled *Christianity as old as the Creation*, the title itself, at any rate, contains a great truth. I speak of Christianity, not technically, but in regard to that which bestows upon it its distinguishing characteristics as a religion,—and these are of all time and of all places. Nor is such view unwarranted by the primitive teachers of what is distinctively called Christianity. They looked back to the remotest and earliest times, and they saw there the germ, or even more than the germ, of that which was most essential in what themselves were teaching the world as, in some of its aspects, a new religion. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of their ancestors as having had the gospel preached to them; and, moreover, he adverts to the faith which he makes the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity as a disposition which had been felt, and which had been magnificently evinced, by the illustrious individuals of all times, from the earliest periods; he resolves it into its simplest elements: "He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and then he tells us that this was the faith, not merely of the Hebrews of that day, but of their celebrated ancestors—the faith of those who had

wrought their deeds in the heroic ages of Judæa; and that this was the religion of the patriarchs themselves, and of the antediluvians back to Abel, whom he regarded as the first of martyrs. Christ himself inculcates a similar notion when he tells us that Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and that he saw it and was glad. Whatever, then, Christianity might be in the opinion of those who had the most authority to define it, it was something which had substantially existed as long as human nature had existed. We are warranted, according to their view, in identifying it with whatever we find of kindred spirit in the earliest ages and in the most widely separated regions, although some of the systems thus linked together may show a good deal of incongruity with one another, may be connected with very different associations, and may have originated through the operation of very different causes.

When we see the patriarch Abraham bearing his testimony to monotheism in the midst of an idolatrous race,—when we behold him, in the strength of that faith, becoming a wanderer, and making his life a long pilgrimage, a pilgrimage of testimony to that germ of truth which was afterwards to be carried out into so many unanticipated consequences;—or when we see the more enlightened men of Egypt rendering their homage to Isis, the universal Isis, whose veil no man had uplifted;—or when we find the Persians considering the world as the scene of conflict between a good and evil principle, a conflict in which eventually the good principle was secure of a complete and enduring triumph;—or when we find the Indian philosophers or priests looking up to a divine triad, which they endowed with the attributes of creation, of preservation, and of destruction,—destruction itself being preparatory to renovation, to a fresh creation, and thus carrying the world round in a never-ending circle;—or when we find Confucius giving to the Chinese, in a period scarcely to be traced in chronology, precepts the practical wisdom of which has borne the test of ages, and which still exert their power over the character of his countrymen, who consider them the standard of duty, and the embodiment of divine wisdom;—or when, in Greece, we see the people refining their mythology, inducing moral attributes on natural and physical beauties,—when we hear Socrates anticipating even

the doctrine of modern times, and preaching the utilitarian morality in the first stages of moral investigation,—or Pythagoras unfolding the mystic harmonies of universal being,—or Plato contemplating the greatest good, and irradiating all things with spiritual beauty;—or when we see David, as he struck his harp, throwing his bold hand over the chords of human feeling,—or Solomon penetrating to the profoundest depths of emotion,—or Isaiah challenging the gods of mythology to show that power which he claimed as belonging solely to Him who fainteth not, neither is weary, and who calls the stars by their names,—and, after this, when we find him contemptuously denouncing the worship of graven images, and, in the spirit of the whole race of prophets, laying the axe to the root of the tree of corruption, and enforcing the necessity of rational opinions;—in all these we behold fragments of an anticipatory Christianity,—we see glimmerings of light like those which precede the dawn of day and the rising of the sun upon the world,—we see moral and spiritual truths flitting about, as in science, before some mind arises to combine them in their due proportions, and to show us the pervading principles by which they are explained and blended, and adapted to the promotion of further discovery and the progress of civilisation. No doubt these were mixed up with many incongruities; but, perhaps, if we could really read the souls of the illustrious men of these different times and countries, we should find the incongruities much less than we imagine.

Moral truth is distinguished from physical truth in this,—that, being the result of introspection and meditation, it generally has a completeness, in the first instance, which, in material science, is only to be obtained by the multiplication of experiments, and by the larger accumulation and classification of facts. The moralists of the earliest times show themselves as wise, in what relates to the essentials of our nature, as the moralists of those days that are most enlightened by the truths of discovery in material nature, because the first are derived from an independent source; they flow immediately from that nature which, in barbarous or in civilised ages, in rude or in polished and well-governed countries, is yet ever essentially the same, the one common heart, the one common mind, of human nature. Their

notions have descended to us through the colouring of their ignorant, it may be their corrupt, contemporaries,—they have descended to us through the disfigurement of a long succession of generations, in which such men have been only comprehended by a small number,—they have descended, perhaps, with some seeming aberrations, arising from the limited views as to matters of fact and history of the individuals themselves. A single sentence of truth was enough to immortalise each of the celebrated seven wise men of Greece; but that single sentence of moral truth implied a world of truth besides in their minds and souls: it implied its complement to the moral and intellectual whole of their existence; and for this, accordingly, we ought ever to give them credit. We are sometimes told of great men who have gained enduring glory by a single action; but that single action has, in such cases, been but the indication of a character that must have been formed through many years, and which must have been evinced in a thousand particulars, though they formed no subject for the recording pen of the biographer or the historian. There are some beautiful remarks to this effect in Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer's *Athens,* in connection with the death of Leonidas, though he does not seem distinctly to have adverted to the extent to which one great quality or action implies greatness of character. He says: "There are men whose whole life is in a single action. Of these Leonidas is the most eminent. We know little of him until the last few days of his career. He seems, as it were, born but to show how much glory belongs to a brave death. Of his character or genius, his general virtues and vices, his sorrows and his joys, biography can scarcely gather even the materials for conjecture. He passed from an obscure existence into an everlasting name. And history dedicates her proudest pages to one of whom she has nothing but the epitaph to relate."*

But that epitaph, though suggested by a single action, and that action the best of his life, yet imparts, it carries with it to the reflective mind, conclusive evidence of a previous life in which the materials of moral greatness and energy had assuredly been forming their combination and producing their manifestation. This grandeur in death

* Vol. ii. book iii. chap. 6, p. 138; 1837.

must have had its corresponding qualities in life; and so is it ever with that which belongs to moral and spiritual reality. In the progress of a building, we can tell but little from a single block of stone, or from a brick that is to form, or that may have formed, a portion of it. The absurdity of the pedant who brought a brick as a specimen of his house has been matter of ridicule from generation to generation. But that which would be absurd in this case may in other cases be reasonable. A building cannot be judged of by a brick; but a human being, a moral being, even a being of animal or vegetable life, may be judged of by its proportions, and the harmony of those proportions, and by its indications of symmetry and beauty, even while it is in the most insignificant stage of its existence, because it is one entire whole, and the presence of any portion demonstrates the presence of the other portions. We believe, therefore, that the individuals who may be connected with what I have called anticipatory Christianity had much more of religious and moral completeness than may be indicated to us by a few scattered principles or precepts, by the faint and glimmering indications which are all that have been transmitted down to our own times. And this fact, which may, I think, satisfactorily be arrived at by reasoning,—this fact is a caution against that scorn of the past which the reforming and progressive spirit is sometimes apt to induce. Whatever discoveries may be made as to the laws of physical operation,—whatever new kinds of machinery may be introduced into the production of that which ministers to the food, clothing, or shelter of man,—whatever combinations there may be even of a new description of social institutions,—the truest wisdom as to what constitutes the excellence of human nature, and the happiness of human nature, may yet be found in the possession of men who lived in the darkest periods, back towards which we can be conducted by no existing records. Nor should their memory perish; nor should they ever be disregarded as the fountains of that true wisdom which makes glad and fruitful the path of human life. It is not the spirit of Christianity so to disregard them, or to pour contempt upon the past, as often has been done by Christian advocates, who have told the most ignorant and unlettered that have received "the faith," in the reception of which they

summed up their notion of salvation, that they knew more of the loftiest subjects than did the wisest sages of antiquity, or than can any of the most enlightened men in countries where Christianity has not yet obtained a footing. Such a pragmatic assumption is as unworthy of Christianity as it is unjust to those who had a sense of its truth and power, although they may not have borne its name. There is nothing of this kind in the teachings of Christ; and I come now to inquire what they were.

What is the Christianity of Christ? and some may ask, perhaps, What other Christianity is there? was he not the author of our holy religion?—to which, in many cases, I should feel compelled to say, No; he was not the author of it, nor of any thing like it; nor was he directly the author of many things which yet now are legitimately entitled to be ranked as parts of Christianity. He was only their author by that remoteness of cause and effect which extends itself in such a variety of ramifications, that it is with the utmost difficulty the greatest acuteness can trace their connection. What was it that Christ taught? what was it that he purposed? We find united in him, in a most remarkable manner, those qualities which existed in preceding times in a separate condition; we find beaming in upon him whatever of religious or moral truth had made its appearance in the East or in the West; we find whatever was most poetical, with what was most prudential, taking its abode in harmony in his mind and his teachings; we find in him a measureless spirit of love to God and man, that love which in his mind became knowledge, became inspiration, became a mission.

To ascertain the Christianity of Christ, there are three main sources of evidence. We may refer to the Sermon on the Mount, to the Lord's Prayer, and to the Parables and controversial conversations. I think in all these we shall be led to the same result. Christ affected no infallibility; he taught great general principles; he taught the spirituality of the Deity, and of the worship by which the Deity was to be honoured; he taught the brotherhood of man, his natural and moral brotherhood, and the consequent resolution of all duty into that love with which brother should be regarded by brother; he taught the existence of virtue in the heart, and not in external actions,

still less in mere ceremonial observances; he taught the immortality of man, the prospect of an endless life beyond this state of earthly being; and he ceaselessly inculcated a superintending providence, a moral government of the world, in virtue of which whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. But these generalities he did not teach as generalities. He taught them with a specific view and a specific object; and his great purpose, running through all his exertions, seems to have been the moral reformation of Judæa.

We trace this in the different sources of evidence which I have just enumerated. The Sermon on the Mount, with the beatitudes of its commencement—with that gracious benediction on the poor, the poor who are promised to be blessed in spirit because theirs should be the kingdom of heaven—with that reconciliation to persecution which it breathes—that expectancy of opposition and of injury which yet is not to be returned by them, but only the more to stimulate them to overcome evil by good—that penetration into motives and feelings which comparatively disregards external actions, and which carries man onward from a vindictive morality to a beneficent and forgiving one, and of which we have such a beautiful series of contrasts in what he said was enjoined by those of old and in what he said to his disciples; the summary of which was, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you"—in his exhortations, and through all the course by which he leads his hearers to the grand image, with which he concludes, of the man who built his house on a rock, so that it remained firm while the loftiest structures of the mere creed-and-ceremony-mongers were borne away by the tempest, so that it remained firm though the rains descended, and the winds blew, and the floods beat upon it, and endured in virtue of its foundation upon a rock;—through the whole of this we trace the influence, the agency, the heartfelt purpose, of the moral reformer of Judaism.

And so in the Lord's Prayer. Though the simplicity of its language, though the benignity of its theology, though the mode in which it connects filial feeling with the profoundest reverence, through the facility with which its language may

be accommodated to the wants of humanity in all times and under all diversities of circumstances,—though these have made it the worthy model for general and perpetual adoption and repetition, yet, even here, why this allusion to God's *name?* why this prayer that his kingdom may come? why this putting forward, and enforcing with the strongest devotional consistency, a *species of forgiveness* that was then neither enjoined by the law nor practised in society? why the reference to "kingdom, power, and glory," which connected themselves in Jewish minds with the national character of Jehovah, the God of their tribe, and its special protector?—why, but that, in all this universality and simplicity of devotion, the author of the prayer was looking to the moral reformation of Judæa?

And in the Parables—whether he portrayed the emotions of the paternal heart—whether he showed the returning prodigal, and the self-righteousness of his blameless but unfeeling brother—whether he described the different modes in which different classes of hearers would receive his own doctrines—whether he reasoned with the Jews on their insensibility to evidence, on their resisting appeals to reason, which showed that they would not have believed though one should have risen from the dead—or whether he portrayed the mingled course of events until the time of spoliation and judgment came—in all there was a distinct bearing on that moral reformation of Judæa which was his immediate purpose, and the obstacles to which made him exclaim, in his closest approach towards bitterness of spirit: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

And it may be said, Is this all that Christ contemplated? is this all that he had in view, and all that is to entitle him to the universal veneration of mankind? I say it was enough to make him the Saviour of the world: for in this limitation of immediate purpose, in this tendency and bearing of every thing upon the regeneration of the country to which he belonged, there was contained that entirety of moral and religious truth of which I have already spoken as evidenced in every mind that shows but one

beam or glimmering of true or genuine wisdom. It was not by abrupt change—it was not by the dissolution of whatever had been held venerable, or had twined itself around men's feelings—that he sought to accomplish this: still less was it by the mere resuscitation of the outward forms of Judaism. He connected the past with the then present and the coming future, in the same way as it is the wisdom of the reformer ever to do. He went to Judaism, not for its forms, but for its spirit—he developed that spirit—he extracted it from the inferior elements in which it had till then been incorporated, and prepared for it a newer and nobler shrine; and so it is that in the past we ever find moral materials for the future, and the work to be accomplished is not destruction but renovation —not the superseding of whatever may have existed, but the development of that in it which is properly everlasting, and which is ever ready to assume such forms as men's wants and energies and hopes demand.

The Hindoos have attributed nine avatars or incarnations to one of their deities, taking place at periods remotely distant from each other, and each having its connection with the state of society at the time when it was supposed to be realised. Whether the Infinite Spirit be regarded as personally incarnate in Christ or not, the spirit of Christianity has been incarnate in the successive ages of the world—now speaking by the voice of a primeval legislator, forming those institutions which bind men together in society and raise them above the rank of a savage horde —now as the sage, seer, or prophet, appealing, in the name of Heaven, to their strongest emotions, and showing forth the terrors or the promises of futurity—now appearing as the philosopher, calmly disentangling the complexities of human thought, analysing man's nature, and deciphering his duty, although it should be inscribed in the dimmest or most hieroglyphical characters—now placed before the world in its most sacred form, as connected with man's salvation—and now mingling with the humblest practical concerns of human life; and thus binding all things together, and assuming all forms, as the plans of Providence and the needs of humanity may successively require their adoption. And in every form we find occasion for the repetition of that admirable expression that

Christ employed when considering the contrast between his own character and that of John the Baptist: "Wisdom is justified of all her children." She is justified of them all, whatever the diversities of their individual character, whatever the means by which they have brought great and broad principles to apply most forcibly to the particular circumstances in which they exist. "Wisdom is justified of all her children;" and she is glorified in those who live most intensely in the interests of their own time, and whose views are yet most broad and ample, comprehending the past, the present, and the future in their conceptions of the plans of God and of the great springs of human action. And thus is Wisdom not only justified and glorified of her children, but the Deity is vindicated in his rational offspring; and we may say that God receives glory through Christ, and through those who have the spirit of Christ.

THE SEVEN AGES OF CHRISTIANITY.

No. II.

August 5th, 1838.

The subject of the lecture last Sunday morning, which I have to continue this morning, is the Seven Ages of Christianity; and my purpose is to show the light that may be thrown upon Christianity by contemplating it historically as well as analytically.

I distributed the progress of Christianity into seven ages: first, anticipatory Christianity; second, the Christianity of Christ himself; third, the age of apostolic Christianity; fourth, persecuted Christianity; fifth, triumphant Christianity; sixth, political and sectarian Christianity; and seventh, as the conclusion of the series, that which we may hope will be the Christianity of futurity. The first two of these—anticipatory Christianity, and that which is embodied in the teachings of Christ himself—were the subject of last Sunday's lecture; and I shall devote the whole of this lecture to what I termed the third age of Christianity, namely, apostolic Christianity. I do so, because so much turns upon it, because so many controversies are connected with it, and because it may lead us to new views of the construction and purpose of the New Testament.

Apostolic Christianity seems to me to have four distinct phases, marked by variations from one another, growing out of one another, and all of them leading to the state of things which took place in the next age to that of the apostles, and which will be hereafter considered. These four phases are: first, that of apostolic Christianity as it was addressed merely to the Jews; secondly, that of apostolic Christianity as it was addressed to that large body of proselytes who, while they received the theology of Moses, did not incorporate themselves with the Jewish people;

thirdly, Christianity as it was addressed to the unproselyted Gentiles, to idolaters, philosophers, or sceptics—to the world that was quite without the Jewish system; and, fourthly, Christianity as it was exhibited to the converted Jews, or to the converted proselytes—as it was exhibited to them, in order to reconcile their minds to this amalgamation with the converted idolatrous Gentiles. The New Testament is made up of these four different representations of Christianity, intermingled with one another, but capable of an easy separation; and, by means of the Acts of the Apostles, we may trace them in the order in which they arose.

We have the first view of Christianity in the speech which Peter delivered on the day of Pentecost, and which is recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. This speech contains the notions that the apostles held and taught of Christianity immediately after their separation from their Master. It was their first effort on being left to themselves. It no doubt goes as far as their views went at that time, and it is directly founded upon that which we have described as the Christianity of Christ. I considered him, last Sunday, as having been the conscious agent of a Jewish moral reformation. He did not put himself forward as the teacher of new truth; nor did he seek to destroy the laws of Moses, and introduce an entirely new system. But he upheld the spirit of the Mosaic institutions—he deduced from that code those pure and simple principles which are identical with religion in all ages; and he endeavoured, by the application of these, founded on the noblest dictates of the human heart, to lead his countrymen out of the gross and universal corruption into which they had plunged. And it was his appearance in the character of a reformer—it was his claiming the divine authority of a moral reformer of the Jewish people—that led to the controversies between him and those in authority, and which terminated in their putting him to death.

Now, Peter, in his address on this occasion, seems to confine himself to Christianity as a means for the moral reformation of the Jewish people. The attempt was not to be abandoned because Christ, the great reformer, was no longer carrying it on in person. The language and

spirit of this speech are as if he had said, "You have rejected him whom Heaven raised up for your deliverance; you have rejected him as a nation—but you may yet regard him as individuals; his blood is upon you as a people —but individually exercise your own minds, look back to what it was that he said, did, and attempted, and turn you from the error of your ways." For this purpose, after a defence of himself and the other apostles from the charge brought against them, he refers his hearers to the predictions of the prophet Joel: he announces the period of his exhortation as the promised "last days," when the spirit of God shall be poured out "upon all flesh;" when there shall be "wonders in the heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved:" a prophecy understood to refer to the threatened destruction of Jerusalem, to the dissolution of the Jewish polity, which was even then pending, and which must arrive unless they adopted a different course. After this introduction, he proceeds to assert the claims of Christ to be this reformer: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Having claimed Divine attestation to the mission of Christ, in spite of their rejection, from Joel's prophecy, he cites also the language of David, and then brings home to the consciences of those whom he addressed the guilt which, as a people, they had incurred. The historian concludes the account of this appeal to the people in this way: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." And in these words, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," I take to be the essence and moral of the effort which Peter made on this occasion. It is given as such by the historian. Here was no an-

nouncement of new doctrines—here was no discovery from heaven of truth of which the world had before been in total ignorance—here was no such claim to the declaration and publication of oracles concerning the Divine nature, or a plurality of persons in that nature, or a scheme for reconciling the salvation of sinners to Divine justice—no such penetration into the decrees of God with regard to the destiny of individuals, their eternal inheritance of glory or subjection to torments—as are sometimes put forth under the name of apostolic Christianity. Peter gives not any view whatever of this sort. "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," the historian tells us, was the essence of all that he said to the Jews on this occasion. That is to say, "the Reformer has been martyred, he has been foully murdered by your rulers; the guilt is on your heads as a nation; you have as a people rejected that reformation which he came to realise;—and now the only thing to be done is, that individually you should repent of the crime for which socially you are responsible," and "save yourselves from this untoward generation," by endeavouring to effect, each in his own person and circle, that moral reformation which he demanded of the whole Jewish nation as a body that they should attempt to realise. And this first view of Christianity we find, after the separation of Christ from the apostles, is a continuation of his effort for a great Jewish reformation; we find it also in other writings of the New Testament which belong to the same period, or in those of individuals whose minds were so imbued with the appropriate view of that period, that they retained it through their subsequent lives. The epistle of James, for instance, bears out this first phase of apostolic Christianity. We find no doctrine in that epistle, none of the speculations that are so abundant in subsequent compositions, especially in those of Paul. We find the topics urged which Christ was accustomed to urge in his own exhortations. We find James closely following Christ in the denunciation of oaths and vows. We find him imitating Christ, also, in stigmatising the hypocrisy which was so common amongst the Jews, and in plain terms declaring himself against that phrase of "salvation by faith," which afterwards became a distinguishing phase of Christianity itself. James disregarded the religious professions of the Pharisees—he inveighs against their hypo-

crisy—he censures that predominance of wealth, that avaricious and grasping spirit, that instability, that subserviency to the pomp of rank or of station, that disposition to deprive the labourer of his hire, and to treat the poorer classes with injustice and with oppression, which were the crying sins of Judæa. The whole epistle of James, distinguished remarkably in its style and object from most of the other epistles, is fraught with the spirit of this first phase of Christianity. To this phase belongs also the gospel of St. Matthew, which is distinguished from the other gospels in giving with singular amplitude Christ's Sermon on the Mount, in which the Christianity of Christ is specially developed—in which there is a continuous appeal to the ancient laws of the Jews, and a contrast is drawn between the spirit of those laws and the mode in which their literal observance was then held. There is in Matthew, also, something like an argumentative arrangement of the wonderful works of Christ, making them all bear on the question of his having Divine authority to attempt the reformation of Judæa. The gospel of Matthew is evidently a piece of argumentative narrative; and this is the point towards which that argumentative narrative is directed. It appeals to the Jews, and to the Jews exclusively—it argues with them the existence of a great and heaven-sent reformer. Now, if it had ended here — if the apostles had been crushed, or if they had been completely successful—how different would the history of the world have been from that time to this! The name Christian would never have been known. It was not yet given; and in that state of things there was no reason why it should be given. There would no more have been Christianity then than there would have been Davidism, or Solomonism, or Elijahism. Christ would have been venerated by the Jews as completing the system of which Moses laid the broad and lasting foundation, but no such notions would have been entertained as subsequently have exclusively arrogated to themselves the name of Christianity. There would have been no creeds—there would have been no Church—there would have been none of the various orders and distinctions, none of the paraphernalia or ceremony, which have since been commonly in the exclusive possession of men's understandings when they have used the word

Christian: but Judaism would have been refined, expanded, spiritualised; the inhabitants of Judæa, taught wisdom, would most likely have avoided the rebellion in which they soon after rose against the Roman power; they would have thought much better of mankind at large; they would have had kinder and more generous feelings; their temple and city might have stood, and there morning and evening sacrifice might have continued to be offered; the spirit of Christ would have been in the institutions of Moses, and they might have endured to this day, exhibiting a national religion, but of a more spiritual and generous kind than the world had before seen under that particular form.

But things could not remain thus. As the apostles were not immediately successful with their countrymen, as a season of conflict commenced, different classes had to be considered; and amongst these, the Gentile proselytes were a numerous and important one. Alienated from the other Gentiles by their reception of the Jewish monotheism—venerating the wise institutions of the Mosaic code, though they did not denationalise themselves and attempt to become incorporated with the Jewish people—they were yet so intimately connected with them, that they necessarily attracted attention; they soon became a party in this controversy relative to Christ the Reformer, who had been put to death; whose disciples maintained that he had risen again; and who was, in every point of view, the author of a grand attempt at a moral renovation. Through the necessity of acting upon these proselytes, Christianity assumed a form substantially the same with what afterwards bore the name; and this form of Christianity had to be announced. This was done by Peter; and here we come to the second phase of apostolic Christianity—its presentation to those who were not Jews by natural descent, nor yet incorporated with the Jewish people as a portion of their nation.

Peter's statement to Cornelius, an eminent person in this class, is in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; and it runs thus: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) that

word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Now, the moral or essence of this is contained in the very first sentence. There is all the peculiarity which distinguishes it from the previous apostolic discourses. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Not in every religion—not in every class or rank of society—but in every nation; the point in Peter's mind being the inclusion of those who were not Jews by descent, and who had not united themselves with the Jewish nation. This was the fact which he perceived—this was the extension which he made in his view of Christianity; and this one point, in fact, seems to have become Christianity, the entire of Christianity, for a considerable period. The great matter of discussion was, whether it was to be confined to the race of Abraham, to the nation of the Jews; or whether it was to include those who were simply proselytes of Gentile origin. But this was not a mere technical matter. In this phase of Christianity we perceive a moral truth, which is always worth much to the world, and which was especially valuable at a period when it was thus suggested to the mind of the apostle Peter, and raised for a time into the peculiarity of a religion. That point is the fraternity of good men, whatever their religion. It was in consequence of this that the name Christian came to be applied. There was something now which it meant. Anterior to this, such a word as Christian or Christianity

would have had no meaning, or would have been only a mark of sectarianism in Judæa. But now there was something special to designate,—the union of good men that belonged to different nations—of those who, agreeing in their views, were yet separated by a barrier that, to their prejudices, had been hitherto insurmountable. The bond of natural descent was loosened by this. The Jew was no longer united to the Jew by a tie which he felt to be of paramount importance to any other which the world possessed. But Christian was united to Christian, whether Jew or Gentile, by that feeling of sympathy in pure principles and lofty purposes which it is well for the world should be called into exercise from time to time; and which, happily, we can observe when, for some great social or philanthropic purpose, man is ready to recognise and hail man as his brother, because they have a common object, and that object one which commends itself to the best feelings and to the noblest energies of their nature.

To understand how this advance, this new view, operated on the minds of those to whom it was suggested, we must look to such compositions as the epistles of Peter, which are thoroughly imbued with this feeling. Whether the first epistle of Peter was written soon after this, or only written when he had attained to a considerable age, still, certain it is that the emotions belonging to such a state—to such a step in the advance of Christianity—had thoroughly possessed themselves of his feelings. I think the whole of the first chapter of his first epistle is an expression of the glowing emotions suggested by this contemplation of people of different nations bound together in mind and heart by a new and a noble tie. In this epistle he does not address himself simply to Jews. He writes to the "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"—to those who were made strangers to the rest of the world by being made brethren to one another. He blesses "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." He looks to an inheritance reserved for them—he exults in it; he speaks of the trial of faith being more precious than that of gold which perisheth; he adverts to Christ, whom, not

having seen, they love; and he especially exhorts them in his spirit to abound in love towards one another. The whole of this chapter is a pouring out of glowing emotions of this nature, claiming for this truth the honours of the word of God, identifying it with all the highest notions that the Jews entertained of their ancient prophets, and completing the expression of his feelings thus: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." What he particularly meant by the gospel, or glad tidings, being this comprehension of all good men within one firm and enduring bond. The gospel of Mark—written, probably, under the direction of Peter, at Rome—is a narrative composition that allies itself with this phase of Christianity, presenting that biography of Christ which was more peculiarly adapted to its promotion and enforcement.

After this step had been made, there was a third which soon after became equally needful. The followers of Christ were brought into collision, not merely with the Jews and the proselytes, but also with those that were without—with the Gentiles, with the idolaters; and it was needful to state to them the views which they entertained. This does not appear to have been attempted by Peter. His mind, perhaps, although it had taken the first great step in that expansion, yet shrank from the much bolder task of overstepping all limit—of going beyond the boundary of even proselytism, as he had gone beyond the boundary of natural descent—and of exhibiting to the world at large a new religion. This task was reserved for the apostle Paul, a man every way formed for such an undertaking; a man whose memory had been largely stored both with Jewish and with Gentile literature—who had studied the poets of Greece and the rabbis of Judæa; a man whose mind was as excursive and active as it was capacious—whose acute discrimination and nice distinction marked him out for one who, in other circumstances, might have been eminent in metaphysical researches, and in probing the

profoundest depths of human nature; a man who had the claim of pure Jewish blood, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," but who had also inherited the rights of a Roman citizen, and thus had every way nutriment for that high and impetuous spirit by which he was characterised; a man before whom the prospect of power had opened in early life —who might have looked forward to stations of command, who had all the rapidity of decision and of action that belongs to such stations, and who yet also possessed by constitution, or had acquired by practice, the skill of accommodating himself to others, which led him on occasions to become "all things to all men, that so he might win some;" a man of action as well as of speculation—with those powers of combination and direction that raise men to stations of command if they are not born to the heritage of power; and who, although going about simply as a missionary of religion, yet seems to have moved with what was substantially regal power, having those at hand who were ever ready to bear his epistles, to repeat his teachings, and to organise churches in the places through which he passed, as if he were laying, as he undoubtedly did, whether consciously or unconsciously, the foundation of a great imperial power. This man was formed to effect a revolution —a revolution of ideas in men's minds; and he accomplished it. His first appeal to the Gentiles seems to have originated in the mode in which the Jews behaved towards him, after he had been discoursing in one of their synagogues, and discoursing in much the same manner as Peter had done before him; but then, with his characteristic impetuosity, he declared that, seeing they rejected this message, it should be borne to the Gentiles—a declaration that raised an outrageous clamour against him, and perilled his life. But, however, he went on; and the mode in which he dealt with the Gentiles we have distinctly before us in his celebrated speech on Mars' Hill. When led there by the Athenians, with some of whom he had been entering into controversy in their public places, he thus announced his view of Christianity: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God. Whom therefore ye

ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Now, compare this discourse with the preceding ones, whether of Paul or of Peter: the first thing that one remarks, is the entire absence of that which constitutes the greater portion of these discourses, and gives them their peculiar character. We have no Jewish argumentation here—we have no appeals to prophecies—we have no attempt to lay the foundation of Christianity by establishing the authority of the books of Moses. We have the introduction of a single fact of Jewish history—the resurrection of Christ. With the exception of this, we have an appeal only to the elementary principles of religion—the spirituality of the Divine nature, of the one God—the community of man's nature—the universal fraternity, not merely of the good men of different nations, which was the extent to which the expansion of Peter's mind got, but the fraternity of all mankind, and the hope of immortality. This is the aspect under which the apostle Paul presented Christianity to the Gentile world, in all its beauty, in all the elementary simplicity of these first principles. According to this statement, not merely were the modern doctrines of Christianity not mentioned—not merely is there nothing about a Trinity,

or atonement, or original sin, or election, predestination, or any dogma of that nature; but there are none of the Jewish peculiarities—there is nothing about the reformation of Judæa—there is nothing about that escape by belief or trust in Christ's announcement of the coming destruction of that country. The whole aspect of things is changed; and we have, as it were, the everlasting principles of spiritual religion, and of that love to man which is the source of all moral duty, here given as what the apostle in this communication, and speaking to such a people, had to propound. And how wise are these simple principles—how does this view destroy the whole fabric of superstition—how does it pour contempt on that ceremonial in which the essence of religion has been so often made to consist—how does it lead to all those different heart-duties which constitute real morality—how does it penetrate to all the affinities, not only with those of our own country, but with those the remotest from us; with those, of whatever condition of life, that are the possessors of the one common heart of humanity; uniting us with the erring as well as with the righteous, making us feel that we are one; and founding on this broad basis of universal sympathy a structure which would have to be gradually raised, by slow processes of reasoning and boundless diversities of feeling, until it should present the entireness of religion and of morals! This is almost the only view, the only systematic view, of the Christianity of mankind, as distinguished from the Christianity of the Jews or proselytes, that we have in the New Testament; and we cannot but regard it with regret, as standing thus solitarily amidst so much that belongs to local circumstances and temporary controversies. It no sooner appears than it vanishes; it is like the lightning that hath ceased to be ere one can say it lighteus. For immediately after it arose the repugnant feelings of bigots of every kind. Bigots there already were, of the native Jews—bigots there already were amongst the Gentile proselytes—bigots there were throughout Christian society, as Christian society then existed—who were by no means disposed to accept such a broad principle, or to agree to such a comprehensive amalgamation with those upon whom they had been accustomed to look down with contempt, on account of difference of race or inferiority of

religious views. And, accordingly, the great task that devolved on the apostolic persons was to reconcile the different classes of believers with this amalgamation, with this extension.

This was the fourth phase of apostolic Christianity—the representation of it that had to be made in order to reconcile the different classes of believers to the broad liberality of its principles, and to the expansiveness which it was acquiring as it advanced. The greater portion of the books of the New Testament was written with this purpose. The historical productions of Luke, his gospel and his history of the Acts of the Apostles,—in both we may trace it in almost every page. When he begins his gospel, he does not stop—like Matthew the Jew, who wrote for the Jews —with tracing the genealogy of Christ to Abraham, the father of the Jews; he traces it back to Adam, the father of all mankind. Of the four gospels, Luke's is the only one which records that beautiful appeal to the human heart, the parable of the prodigal son. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke minutely details the different steps by which the preachers of Christianity were led, from addressing themselves first to the Jews, then to the proselytes, and eventually to the Gentiles. The work is, in fact, a sort of historical apology for the course which they took; and we may regard both his gospel and the Acts as a continuous work, having this great object in view. It had to be striven after by other means. It led to Paul's epistle to the Romans. He endeavoured to reconcile the Jews and proselytes to this religion by a theory of the union of the whole world previous to the Mosaic institutions, by their being then in a state of righteousness, not in consequence of there being laws that had not then been formed, but by some higher principle—by something which he called faith, and which belonged to mankind as such, and not to the Jewish race distinctively. He then described the law as being a temporary one—as being designed, amongst other things, to show its own inefficiency, and drive men back to a simple and common principle, which applied alike to all the divisions of the human race, and belonged to the Gentile as much as to the Jew—it being the purpose of God to save them all by faith. Paul here uses the word faith in a directly opposite way to that of the

apostle James. In censuring the notion of salvation by faith, James was considering the pharisaic hypocrisy of the Jews. In endeavouring to establish such a notion as salvation by faith, Paul was levelling his weapons at much the same class of persons, though they bore the Christian name—at those who were looking to something exclusive, to some system of law, religion, or morals, set up as their particular portion; and so he takes faith, trust, confidence—something which can be ascribed to man universally, which belongs to man every where and at all times—and this he raises into supremacy over all the Jewish notions of law and righteousness. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews had the same object; but he took a third course, which was that of allegorising the entire Jewish system—of finding, for their external temple, a spiritual temple in Christian minds and hearts—of finding, for their sacrificial offerings, offerings of prayer and thanksgiving—of finding, for their external conformity with a prescribed ceremonial, the conformity of man's conduct with his own conscience, with the conviction of his intellect, and with the best emotions of his heart: thus endeavouring to show, that whatever there was in one system for man to glory in, there was more in the other; and that this indefinite, this universally extending system, which perhaps to the Jews seemed almost a species of atheism, yet had in fact the noblest of temples, the best of sacrifices, and the purest conformity with the standard of unerring excellence, towards which man could direct his attention. The gospel of St. John and the book of Revelation belong in some measure to this class of writings, whilst in another view they refer themselves to the age which followed; for the object of these works seems to be to conciliate, not so much the rigidity of the Jews and the Gentile proselytes, as to attract those, whether Jews or Gentiles, whose minds had become impregnated with the Oriental philosophy of that time, and, most likely, with some species of the strange system which so long prevailed over the greater part of the Eastern world under the designation of Gnosticism. The influences of these speculations on the appearance of Christianity will more properly refer themselves to the next age, in which it appeared.

What I have now said of apostolic Christianity may be concluded by two or three observations. If there is

any justice in the reference which has been made as to the occasion and the design of the different books of the New Testament, how absurd, how unspeakably absurd, is the attempt to derive Christianity, as a system of unchanging and abstract doctrine, from passages in works that were produced for such purposes as have been mentioned! How often have writings, which were designed merely to reconcile the bigot Jew to the inclusion in a fraternal bond of the Gentile proselyte—to reconcile the bigot proselyte to adhesion in a fraternal union with the mere Gentile, with the heathen—how often have texts, which were directed to these purposes, been applied to those totally different! how often have the peculiarities of Oriental phraseology, at once commending itself to their minds—at once showing, by the purpose of the author, what he was aiming at—been made the foundation of tenets of the strangest nature, at which "reason stands aghast"! It is not thus that we can read the New Testament with any profit. I hope that the kind of analysis which has grown out of the history of Christianity during that period may lead us to have a clearer conception of what each writer was aiming at, and, consequently, of the means that he would employ for that purpose. The New Testament will thus commend itself to our intelligent admiration. We shall regard much of it, indeed, as temporary in its purpose—as using arguments which would be of little worth with those who had not the notions of the persons to whom those arguments were addressed; but still, by preserving the history of ancient controversies, tracing the steps by which Christianity outgrew the form of a Jewish national reformation of morals, into a system of faith and practice—into an elementary religion which deserved to become the foundation of the religion of humanity. The authors of this change—the instructors of the Jews, of the proselytes, and of the Gentiles—the agents of Heaven to enlighten humanity—were not the Jewish priesthood, were not the priests individually: no, not one of them—of those, I mean, who were most active, and whose writings are preserved to us; neither did they constitute themselves a priesthood, nor did they found a priesthood. It has been remarked of the writers of the Old Testament, that those of them whose views of the Deity are

the most reasonable and the most exalted, were not their priests, but their philosophers, or even their men of action —such sovereigns as David and Solomon; and an analogous remark to this applies to the New Testament, which has no traces of a priestly origin, any more than of a priestly spirit. To a priestly class the world owes tithes and religious taxes, the accumulation of dogmas into creeds, the attempt permanently to suppress the free operation of the human mind, and to reduce virtue into a mere useless ceremonial, the exhibition of the bitterness of a sectarian spirit, and every varied mode of persecution; while to the non-priestly reformers—men unconsecrated, save by the dedication of their own heaven-inspired minds, to attempt a great and good work for themselves and their fellow-men—to these we owe the most efficient reformation, the purest spirituality, the most expansive benevolence in morals, and the brightest prospects of the improvement of mankind.

THE SEVEN AGES OF CHRISTIANITY.

No. III.

August 12th, 1838.

I HAVE to conclude this morning the subject which has already occupied two lectures—the "Seven Ages of Christianity;" in which my object has been to place before you the manner in which Christianity has been modified by the state of human thought and feeling through the successive periods of its historical development. Three of these periods have already been noticed: first, the anticipatory Christianity of those who lived before the times that produced the New Testament, and who in different ways had glimpses of religious truth, which, however much they might be assimilated to the peculiarities of their national or individual modes of thought, yet had a natural, obvious, and strong affinity with the spirit of religion, as afterwards embodied in what was properly called Christianity; secondly, the Christianity of Christ himself, the moral reformation of the Jews, which was the immediate object of his mission; thirdly, the Christianity of the apostles, which occupied the whole of the last lecture, and which was considered under four different phases, as they made their appeal either to their countrymen the Jews, to the Gentile proselytes, or to the unproselyted Gentiles,—the heathen, those of the world without,—and as they endeavoured to reconcile the former of these classes by their representation of Christian truth, and their theorising concerning it, to this novel amalgamation of the Jew and the heathen. There remain to be considered the four ages in which Christianity may be described as persecuted, as triumphant, and as becoming a political and sectarian Church, and, finally, that mode of it which we may anticipate will prevail in future; and these, for reasons which I have already explained, may be passed over—some of them, at least—in a very summary manner.

We come next, then, to the fourth age of Christianity, namely, persecuted Christianity. This phrase might, indeed, apply to the days of the apostles, who were themselves the objects of general and outrageous persecution; but I have endeavoured, in this distribution of the history of Christianity into seven periods, to mark each briefly by its distinctive character: and the influences of persecution on the form of religion, and on its essence and spirit too, were much more plainly developed in the times which followed the apostles than they were in their own days: for persecution is one thing when it rages against an individual, or against a few persons of a pure and lofty, of a determined and heroic, spirit; and it is another thing when it is directed against a miscellaneous collection of persons, drawn from all classes of society, of all ages, of both sexes, of different modes of thought and different habits of life, and who, though united and blended together by a pure and spiritual religion, yet cannot exhibit that identity of character, or that singleness of result, which is the effect of persecution when it only presses upon such individuals as have been described. Christianity may be regarded as persecuted during the interval from the apostolic time till its establishment by Constantine the Great; and if we just advert to the condition of society then, we shall see abundant reasons why it must have been persecuted, we shall see the impulses which in every quarter led men to this mode of action towards the professors of a new religion.

Persecution was first the work of the Jews, and afterwards of the Gentile heathen—the Roman authorities. The Jews persecuted, in the first instance, on the principle by which every corrupt government opposes a popular reformation. The authorities of Judæa felt that their position, their influence, was affected by the change which the preaching of Christ seemed likely to make in the popular mind. They set themselves to resist that change. Their credit for saintship, with the ignorant multitudes that paid them veneration, was at stake; their gains as a priestly order were at stake, by the extension of a more spiritual religion, in which their interpretation of the law and their ceremonies would be comparatively disregarded, and, consequently, their pecuniary profits derived from these sources would be diminished; their power was at stake,

—for in the condition of Judæa, then merely a Roman province, that power rested very much on opinion; and if opinion were alienated from it, they would be in the position of men having pretensions to high authority, but with no force which could back that authority left at their disposal by their Roman masters. Afterwards, no doubt, a strong feeling of resentment would add to these reasons, and would give bitterness to the Jewish persecution of the apostles; for the priests and elders were then charged with a great national crime,—they were accused of having the stain of innocent blood upon them, when they ought to have been only Heaven's ministers of justice and of mercy. On every occasion, public and private, the apostles boldly and energetically branded them with the guilt of having destroyed the Just—of having not only resisted a reformation which was heaven-commissioned, but of having followed their forefathers in their conduct to the prophets, and put to death most unjustly and atrociously one who was raised up of God to lead them in the path of safety and of happiness. To these inducements a third would be added, as soon as Christianity was preached to the proselytes of Gentile origin, and still more when the heathen were included in its design. They would then feel that their ancient privileges were at stake,—that the spiritual advantages which they had long boasted of enjoying, as the children of Abraham, were about to be merged and lost in the inclusion of a multitude of different countries, who were to possess greater spiritual privileges than they had ever enjoyed—who were to be a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, whose moral glory should outshine all that had been bestowed upon them by the institutions of Moses. Any such influences as these, any thing analogous to these motives, have always induced persecution, and will do so while human interests have so strong a grasp over human thoughts and actions.

With the Gentiles, who afterwards became the great persecutors, a different set of feelings came into play. Sometimes they persecuted from the simple reaction of what they deemed the intolerance of Christianity. They were accustomed to an intercommunity of gods and of worship. If any set of people had a deity, and raised altars, and practised ceremonies of a different kind from those of the inhabitants of the land in which they dwelt,

they made their appeal to the political authorities; they obtained the recognition of their gods among the gods of the state; and the different systems of theology were harmoniously blended with each other in one great superstition, which was inclusive of all. But here sprang up a set of people among them, who would submit to no such intercommunity—who did not wish to have the statue of Christ, or the ark of God, placed among the objects of worship that were consecrated at Rome—who would not endure any such blending or mutual recognition —who declared their own to be the true God, and the only God, and all else to be vanity, man's imagination, or, perhaps, according to a subsequent interpretation, rebellious spirits, demons, who were to be abjured and abhorred. There was, therefore, something of a reaction—there was a disposition to resist that which threatened not merely to take a place among other religions, but which seemed to stake its own existence on becoming the universal religion. Then, the Gentiles had their priests, whose interests were at stake, like those of the priests of Judæa; and, perhaps, other more sordid interests were imperilled. We know the uproar which was raised at Ephesus when Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen saw that the hope of their gains was endangered by the preaching of the apostle Paul. Such a feeling would be general. The desertion of the heathen temples which, at a subsequent period, took place—the absence of the sacrifices and offerings that used to be brought there—must have raised a strong feeling of hostility in the minds of the Pagan priesthood against the progress of Christianity. The rulers, too, would doubt whether the new religion was adapted to that which generally recommends a religion to governments—namely, the purpose of keeping the people in a state of superstitious and entirely submissive observance of their own edicts. They would be jealous of it on this score. If they gave any attention to the notion of the fraternity of man—which formed so prominent a part of Christianity, as Paul preached it to the Athenians—they would surely recoil with horror from a doctrine which tended to undermine and overthrow the power of their throne. At a subsequent time, when Christians had become numerous, party-spirit would be added to the various inducements to

persecution. The Christians were regarded as a faction in the state—as a class of people with a separate interest from that of other classes in the community, and one which they were steadily and energetically pursuing. Men's minds would be roused by, perhaps, what they would deem patriotism, to resist the growing strength of such a faction, to humble its pride, to keep down its professors, and to incapacitate those amongst them who might aspire to political stations from gaining the influence which is always associated with such stations, and thus always injuring the class-interests of those by whom they were raised. Under these various motives, there was a continued series of fierce inflictions on the disciples of Christianity through the course of about three centuries; and, in illustrating Christianity historically, our inquiry now is, what was the effect produced by these persecutions on the doctrines, forms, and spirit of the religion that was exposed to them?

Now, one of the first and most remarkable of these results was the doctrine of the millennium—I mean the original doctrine of the millennium: not that of modern times, which is made up of the philosophic speculations of human perfectibility, and with which comparatively few persons associate the notion that Dr. Priestley entertained of an actual personal reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth; but that of the supposed speedy return of Christ in person —that of the raising of the Christian dead, and of a rule and authority established by Christ, and participated in by his followers, over all the nations of the earth; and specially including the rebuilding—and that in the most splendid form, as the world's metropolis—of the temple and city of Jerusalem;—in fact, the doctrine which is taught literally in the book of Revelation, and which, in those days, was literally received, and was a great source of consolation to men's minds. These expectations were generally prevalent amongst Christians in the apostolic times, and are thus described in a work which, I believe, I have mentioned before as perhaps the best-written work, the most philosophical in its spirit, and the most candid and lucid in its statements, that the Unitarian controversy has produced—namely, Professor Norton's *Statement of Reasons for not Believing the Doctrines of Trini-*

tarians. He says on this subject: "I do not refer to the Apocalypse as the work of St. John, for I do not believe it to be so. But, as it was written during the latter part of the first or the early part of the second century, it affords evidence of the opinions of those who were disciples of the apostles. I regard it as the production of some early Jewish Christian, whose imagination was highly excited by the expected coming of Christ. It does not, I think, appear that he himself intended to assume the character of the apostle John, or that there is ground for charging him with any fraudulent design." This theory of authorship may be correct or incorrect; but it does not at all interfere with the interpretation which he gives, and which I take to be well founded, in the work itself: "It appears, then, that there had been so much expectation among Christians of the speedy return of Christ, as to afford occasion to the ridicule of scoffers. The writer, it seems, conceived that it would be attended with the renovation of all things by fire; a conception which is not to be confounded with that of the consummation of all things by fire at the termination of the Messiah's reign. The former seems to have been peculiar, and borrowed, not from the notions of the Jews concerning the coming of the Messiah, but from Gentile philosophy, particularly the Stoic. There is nothing answering to it elsewhere in the New Testament, nor, I think, in the Jewish traditions. It is quite different from the notions entertained by the earliest Christian fathers, which correspond to those held by the Jews, and expressed in the Apocalypse; though they comprised much which had nowhere been taught by any apostle. The earlier fathers believed, to quote the description of Justin Martyr, who appeals to the Apocalypse as his authority, that Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged; that there was to be a resurrection, in which the followers of Christ who were dead, together with the patriarchs and prophets and other pious Jews, were to return to life; that these, with the body of Christians, were to inhabit that city with Christ, rejoicing for a thousand years, at the end of which would follow the general resurrection and judgment of all." And it was a grand and a beautiful vision, that renewing of Jerusalem—that raising from the ruins of their own temple and city, which had been desecrated by the conduct

of the priests and the people, of a new city and temple, in which the glory of Christ would be displayed, and whence his laws would go forth to all the nations of the earth. It no doubt fired and animated their imagination; and the more darkly the storm raged around them,—the more they saw the different powers of the earth, which had seemed so permanent, overwhelmed by the all-absorbing force of Roman domination,—the more would they cling to this vision, delight themselves in it, and compress its promised joys of a thousand years into the gladness and happiness of the hopes and expectations to which, in their minutes and hours of persecution and anguish, they resorted for strength to meet their trials. This doctrine passed away, as the time elapsed during which it was expected it should be realised.

The other results of persecution were of a more enduring character. One of these was the mutual adhesion and affection of the believers in Christianity. Diversified as they were in the classes from which they were drawn, when once they became Christians, the hostile power of society was so strong around them, that they were driven and constrained into a strong unity with one another, into a firm adhesion, which led them to act with common feelings and purposes under the influences of common hopes and common sufferings. The effect of such treatment by society has always been the same. Those who, in the time of prosperity, are full of divisions with one another, and prone to the fiercest attacks upon one another, learn to adhere to one another more firmly when they are thus generally assailed by the world without; and if they do not adopt such a system of common property as was adopted by the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, they yet make large sacrifices, and forego many prejudices which in a different state of things would be insurmountable. What an uproar, for instance, has recently been excited in America, by the attempts of philanthropic individuals to raise the black portion of the population to an equal standing with the whites! Wherever efforts have been made for the association of the whites and the blacks together, popular feelings have taken the alarm, riot and incendiarism have ensued, and scenes have been exhibited disgraceful to a civilised country. And do we imagine that the

ancients had not their prejudices of a similar description? Was not society then divided into slaves and slave-owners? Were there not national distinctions, in which the strongest and most supercilious contempt was entertained by one race towards another race, by one people towards another people? Christianity threw down these barriers; and, perhaps, was aided in throwing them down by the indiscriminate attack which was made on all who adopted its notions. Hence, we find that masters associated with their slaves; and in the account of the martyrdom of that noble Roman lady, Vivia Perpetua, we find that, before the day of execution appointed for those convicted of Christianity, the noble and the ignoble, the free and the slave, sat down to the common feast of love, to prepare themselves for the endurance of what they had on the morrow to undergo. This was the period in which it was said that the enemies of Christianity exclaimed, "See how these Christians love one another!" and this was the most remarkable moral feature of that age of Christianity.

Another result, both of this mutual attachment and of the assaults to which they were exposed, was a proselyting spirit; and this, too, was characteristic. They were always on the look-out for converts. They aimed at all, however high or low their station. They endeavoured to act upon the minds of the ignorant, and they made boldly their appeals to the learned and the philosophical. They put forth their public apologies to emperors and senates; they claimed the hearing of the multitude. To all ranks, all nations, all classes of mind and of character, they directed their efforts; and they drew unto themselves, from all of them, converts who cannot be supposed at once to have conformed the whole state of their thoughts and their modes of mental operation.

Proselyting led to another result. It led to a kind of amalgamation of what was called Christianity with the different speculations, philosophical speculations, and with the different mythological practices, that then prevailed. They converted the sturdy Jew, the proud, isolated, and bigoted descendant of Abraham: but he retained his feelings of Jewish predominance; and in the small sect of the Ebionites, we find a party of Jewish Christians existing two centuries before they would submit to any amalgamation

with the Gentiles. They converted the Platonic philosopher: he brought with him his speculations on the nature of the Deity—the attempts of his master, and which had been followed up by the disciples of his master, to reason upon the infinite and universal Intelligence; and these theories, blending themselves with what he was taught of the God and Father of Christ, induced upon Christianity the notion of persons in the Deity, gradually matured into the doctrine of the Trinity. The Gnostic speculator was converted, bringing with him his conceptions of spiritual powers and principles and agencies: he became the author of a new Christian doctrine, the result of this amalgamation, and forming itself in time into the notion of an angelic and archangelic hierarchy. The Persian was converted, but he could not forget the conflict of the two principles. His theory of the struggle of good and evil pervaded the new facts that were presented to his understanding: and so, from the junction of his notions, there sprang up the conception of Satan, of the devil of philosophising Christianity, the evil principle opposed to the good principle, and battling it out with the Deity with a power and energy that can succumb only to absolute Omnipotence. Those Eastern speculators, who held the notion of the corrupt nature of man, were Christianised. They generated the doctrine of original sin, of the entire and total corruption of this our human constitution, and of the necessity for the permanent indwelling of some Divine spiritual influence to generate a single good thought, or a single virtuous or beneficent action. The common idolaters of the Roman country were converted. They brought with them their habitual veneration for demigods and hero-gods; they retained their conception of a long chain of powers acting under one Deity, who was too cold an abstraction for their imaginations to realise; and hence, very naturally and speedily, sprang up the worship of martyrs, of saints and confessors, and of tutelary agents. The pagan doctrine of Fate was held by others as the foundation of all their notions; and when they were Christianised, there sprang up that tenet of predestination which has since been pushed to such fearful consequences, so tremendous in the views which they give alike of the vindictiveness of the Divine character, of the forlorn state of a large portion of humanity predestined

to endless suffering, and of the anguish and torment of that hell to which this nominally Christian fatalism allows no termination. And there would be much to give the darker of these notions that preponderance which they obtained, and which has made them endure so long in man's faith. Much as there might be of meekness and mildness, of long-suffering and benevolence, in the character of the Christians who were thus treated, their anger would sometimes get the upper hand; vindictiveness was cherished in their hearts, and embodied in their bitter words. They would break out, as Tertullian did, in anticipated rejoicing over their own exaltation and glory, and over the defeat, the disgrace, the punishment, the anguish, of their persecutors. They would speak of a day of judgment, in which they should look on with exulting triumph, while those at whose commands they were dragged to the scaffold and the stake, and consigned to the most lingering and excruciating torments, should be themselves the subjects of a yet worse treatment than this, inflicted by the retribution of Omnipotence; and thus was the basis laid of feelings which have shown themselves in different sects of Christianity from that age to this, and have even led some, in comparatively recent times, to declare that the blessed in heaven will have a livelier relish given to their joys by the howlings of the damned.

And whilst these various influences were giving corresponding characteristics to the Christianity of that age,—to persecuted Christianity,—there was another and more external operation also going on ceaselessly. The Christians were united into societies, or churches, that had elders and bishops at their heads. The strength with which they resisted oppression, or the activity with which they disseminated their religion,—the controversies which arose from the different modes of thought that were successively introduced,—these would all add to the importance of their leaders, elders, teachers, bishops, or by whatever name they might be called. When controversies raged, the bishops would be the persons by whom they were conducted. When heresies were to be detected, and the purity of the Christian faith asserted, the bishops would be deputed to draw up the expression of their faith, and thus to introduce the reign of forms and creeds. When persecution was to be resisted or endured,—when there was a moral battle to be waged with

the world without, and the force of patience was to be opposed, and that successfully, to the force of persecuting power,—the bishops would be the leaders of these little bands in their arduous struggles. Or when, in times of prosperity, they showed themselves in the face of society,—could array their numbers, and boast of their wealth,—still episcopal authority would be at the head of all, to which influence, veneration, riches, power, all tended, until it was elevated into a hierarchy capable of accomplishing the most extensive purposes, in regard both to political institutions and to social arrangements. Bishops accordingly were the leaders of the Christians as a political party, in that peculiar juncture of events when the disputed right to the imperial crown made every large body of men of importance, and when, by the coincidence of events, Constantine was raised, and with him Christianity was raised, into a state of power and of triumph.

This introduced the next, the fifth age of Christianity—triumphant Christianity. I need not particularly describe this, as I have done so not very long ago with some amplitude in the discussion of the "Three Ideas of Christianity;" and under the name of the Roman-Catholic idea—that of saving the world by an organised priesthood—I have there shown the form which Christianity assumed through the many generations in which its position was triumphant. We need, therefore, now but just glance at it. It became possessed of power; and freely, indeed, did it use that power. We may consider Christianity, triumphant Christianity, as embodied in the Roman pontiff. He was, in fact, the living Christianity of the age, of a long succession of generations and of centuries; he was Christianity in a vital and human form, taking possession of regal palaces, ascending its own throne of power, and donning the triple crown; executing vengeance on those by whom it had been so long opposed; making new laws, and changing the institutions of the empire; subjecting the lives of believers to a continual surveillance; watching them by means of the priesthood and of auricular confession, which now began to be employed,—watching them, so as to bring their very thoughts into submission to the power of the Church; organising, in the different orders of priests and monks, a standing army, which could be extended at will throughout all the nations of the earth,

blending with every society, but yet isolated from all societies, —Christianity wielding a power such as the height of imperial authority had never before possessed, or even aspired to, or perhaps imagined,—exercising it over all temporal sovereignties, until kings bent their necks beneath the proud foot of the pontiff, and the whole world seemed to lie at his bidding and his mercy.

Such was triumphant Christianity, till the time when the human mind would not endure this vassalage,—when the great shock of the Reformation took place, when a new order of things arose, and that age came which I have described as the age of political and sectarian Christianity. I need not now go particularly into the character of the Reformation. That has been discussed many times. Suffice it to say that, in that shock, two results sprang up, neither of which was precisely what the reformers contemplated. Where the government took charge of the Reformation, as it did in this country, Christianity, from a spiritual empire lording it over the government, became subordinate to the government; it became the tool of temporal authority; and, accordingly, one result of the Reformation, which has been distinctly traced in history, was the augmentation of regal power in every nation to which it extended,—this was the immediate result. The bishops, the hierarchy, instead of being the masters of the temporal authorities, became their subjects, their slaves. What was to be believed? what should be done and practised as worship? what should be inculcated upon and catechised into children? what should be framed as permanent laws for ecclesiastical discipline and regulation?—all these were tinctured and tainted with the interposition of political authority. This enacted exclusion; this created external privileges, and gave to the whole that temporal air which establishes the religion of mere form and conventionalism—powerful, it may be, as a whole, but destined at no very long period to wear out, and now in this country wearing out before our eyes,—becoming an empty array of words and forms, of which pecuniary interest and political influence seem to be the only or the chief tangible results. Sectarian Christianity, the other of the two streams flowing from the common fountain of the Reformation, was at first defensive, was the social principle called into exercise

to resist the weight of National-Church authorities, or of political authorities, now beginning to interfere. Men regimented themselves on the principle of self-defence. They gave up individuality, in order to become mutual governors and governed; they formed themselves into little bands, which soon originated some of the worst kinds of tyranny, by minute interference with one another's thoughts and conduct—a petty, low, and debasing kind of tyranny, under the name of religion, which tends to crush all freedom of thought, speech, or action, and to demolish whatever should distinguish an individual from others of his country and race. This tends to wear out as much as political authority, although by much slower gradations; because in these modes of binding men together, in the power of expulsion always possessed, in the amount of ignorance and prejudice which may always be drawn in by conversion, there are sources of perpetuity which a mere political establishment is not possessed of. In this state is Christianity now, —divided between its political and sectarian forms, neither of them tending to satisfy an enlightened mind, neither of them offering the best security for spirituality of worship and for the progress of the human character; but still denoting a time of transition, showing that the world is on its way towards other forms which are yet to rise: and thus viewed, though Christianity may have in it an enduring essence that preserves its identity, it really designates a succession of mental and religious phenomena which grow one out of the other, and will continue to do so until it reaches a form in which human nature, advancing towards its highest perfection, can rest satisfied and complacent.

The Christianity of Futurity! who shall venture to describe it? What could have been known or conjectured of the Christianity of what was futurity to them, by those who lived during any of the periods to which we have adverted? What would the Christianity of futurity, as depicted by those in the persecuted age of Christianity, have been, but the descent, the bodily descent, of Christ in the clouds of heaven, to raise the righteous dead, and to assume with them a temporal authority over the nations of the earth? What would have been the Christianity of futurity to Pope Gregory VII., when he was conducting the papal power to its highest point of preëminence over the political

authorities of Christendom, but a Church absorbing all states, gradually even demolishing the external forms of royalty and aristocracy, subjecting all society to a priesthood, and that priesthood to a Roman pontiff, until his attributes and powers should seem indeed to identify him with the God of heaven? What is the Christianity of futurity of every different religious sect which now exists, but the universal belief of its own dogmas, whatever those dogmas may be—the universal practice of its own forms, whether those forms be few or many, simple or complicated, rational or absurd in the extreme degree? And as these different visions of futurity have not been realised, why should we rely upon our own; or think that we alone, among the successive generations that have passed away, can detect with accuracy that which Providence has yet to accomplish? The futurity of Christianity or religion! We cannot predict the futurity of any institution that belongs to humanity. We cannot predict the governments and politics of futurity. We cannot tell in what names, in the course of a few centuries, men shall be ruled, what will attract their veneration, what will command their obedience; we cannot tell what shall be the philosophy of these times. We know that physical facts, once ascertained, are ascertained for ever; we know that classifications and arrangements in science, once perfected, are made for ever. But how small a portion is that which has assumed the entire form of the whole body of scientific fact!—how much smaller a portion is it of spiritual or metaphysical fact! And what can we tell of the principles of philosophy which shall hereafter arise to throw light upon the past, and which may then indeed give a clearer glimpse of futurity? We cannot tell what shall be the social arrangements of futurity, what shall be held by public opinion to constitute the best combination of private and public worth. We can only arrive at a few general principles. The modes of their development must be left to the condition of a society that has not yet come into existence. How ill, then, would it become us to talk with confidence of the Christianity of futurity! But we have some guidance in negative qualities, which also, in turn, lead to the conception of positive qualities. We may be assured, whatever may be the Christianity of futurity, that it will not be a

faith claiming credence on account of its unreasonableness, —that the exclamation of one of the fathers, "I believe, because it is impossible," will not be the consecrated maxim of the ages that are to come,—that tenets at which "reason stands aghast" will only be contemplated as the tenets of ages that have gone by, and that they will take their place with the strange and shapeless monsters of the world that existed before the creation of its present forms. We may feel assured that the religion of futurity will not be a slavish religion,—that it will not put such doctrines as passive obedience and non-resistance — doctrines in which the Church of England once glorified itself—at the head of its creed. We may be assured that, as political freedom is evidently progressing in the world, the religion which shall correspond with its further advances must be a religion that encourages man's liberty of thought and of speech, and is more a matter of individual concern, and less of social dictation, than it has been in the ages that are gone, than it is in the age in which we live. We may be assured that the Christianity of futurity will not be an unprogressive system—that it will not be fixed, be petrified, in forms and creeds from which posterity is never to depart—that it will be allowed to accommodate itself to human nature, will contain in itself the principles of progression, corresponding with those which belong to the human constitution, and thus hold on in equal pace with man as he advances in his resemblance to the Deity.

Perhaps any thing more defined than this, in relation to the Christianity of futurity, it would be rash to predict; but in contemplating that of the past, and that which now exists, we may, at any rate, learn the inconsistency of the strong feelings of reprobation which are so usually associated with the different modes of belief and unbelief. We often hear of the enemies of Christianity. What have the men been who are frequently the most strongly denounced, the most deeply branded, as the enemies of Christianity?—what have they been but those who put the Christianity of a future age in opposition to the Christianity of a past age,—who, entering into views and feelings that the world had not then adopted, but which it has since adopted, brought these into collision with forms and a spirit that were wearing out, and that it was their merit

to combat with, and so to aid in accelerating the rate at which they were departing from men's thoughts? The right of each one, his individual right of opinion, is what the world is most slow to recognise, and yet it is what the history of Christianity itself most impressively teaches; for continually as certain ideas become consecrated, as they become the essential and vital Christianity of one age, which, in a preceding period, had been denounced as damnable heresies, we may learn some toleration even for intolerance. The very eagerness of these discussions, perhaps the mutual denunciations that were hurled, might act as stimuli to mental vigour, that might be among the means by which the transition was hastened on. Thus it is that God is said, by the Psalmist, to make the wrath of man to praise him, while the remainder of it he restrains. Heaven forbid that we should be indifferent to any exertion of the mind—to any development of moral or religious feeling—to any collision which may be produced by these—to any conflict of principles in the political, or intellectual, or social world, though it may not bear exclusively or distinctively the character of Christianity or of religion! In all these things, it becomes us to feel the interest which appertains to all in which humanity is concerned, and which belongs to the machinery by which the progress of man is achieved. Let us fulfil the duties of the time as best we can. Let us think nothing too minute, too temporal, too alien from what we may have deemed religion, to engage the feelings of our hearts and the vigour of our exertions, if thereby human suffering can be alleviated, ignorance dispelled, and the progress of humanity advanced. But while we do this—while we regard the best fulfilment of the duties of time as the most efficient preparation for immortality—let us also not neglect the intervals of mental retirement from these collisions, when, withdrawing, we can sit apart, and, as from some lofty eminence, contemplate the flitting scene around us,—look back upon the past, analyse the present, realise what we can of futurity; and, by seeing the continuity of all, and the brightening character of all, rise towards the complacency of Him who at first looked down upon his works, and saw that all was good, and blessed it, and who augments this blessing through all successive ages, leading his creatures on by his providential plan in their

mental and moral advancement. Thus shall we dwell in the pure light of truth—thus shall we obtain a complacency of feeling towards all that is: the evil will appear to us evidently absorbed in the good, and the good will appear to be augmenting itself yet more and more, and with constantly increasing brightness. We shall thus realise the anticipations of the apostle, directed by him towards the human frame in its regeneration and preparation for immortality, but which may be applied likewise to the universal system—we shall see corruption putting on incorruption, and death swallowed up of life.

THE DOCTRINE OF OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL POWERS.

DELIVERED ON THE SUNDAY BEFORE ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

August 19*th*, 1838.

I ANNOUNCED the lecture of this morning as expository of the 13th chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, and I shall commence with reading the chapter: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (or condemnation). "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

These first seven verses all relate to one subject. They contain the apostle's doctrine concerning civil government, and the obedience which should be rendered to it. The next seven verses relate to another and a more comprehensive subject, namely, the apostle's doctrine of morals—his theory of moral philosophy. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not

bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The verses just read contain the apostle's principle of moral philosophy. The last, and those which follow, contain the motives, permanent or temporary, in which he found the sanction of what he laid down as duty, and enforced it upon those whom he addressed. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Before I proceed to any commentary on this chapter, I will explain why I have selected it on the present occasion. It certainly was on account of the subject which occupies the earlier portion of it. The Christian doctrine, the apostolic doctrine, of civil government is of importance at all times; but recent appeals to it have given it also a kind of temporary interest. The public solemnity* to which several of my recent lectures have referred has led to its being brought forward and insisted on in various ways, by divines of different persuasions, according to their perception of the nature and extent of the obedience enforced upon subjects, and of the relations they bear to their rulers. This was one reason; but I have another, which is, that in the course of the week that we have now commenced comes the day of St. Bartholomew. You have observed, no doubt, that I pay great respect to the calendar in the selection of subjects. I think it is a useful operation for the mind frequently to advert to the associations with which different days are connected. They bring before us the illustrious dead of past times. The anniversaries of their births or their deaths seem to draw our spirits nearer to them, to give us a fuller communion with what there was in them great and good, and to make their examples

* Coronation of Queen Victoria, June 28, 1838.

influential on the heart and life, when else they might be defunct. When days are connected with particular events, we naturally and almost necessarily direct our attention to those events—we have the principles which they teach more forcibly inculcated upon us—we feel the unity of the past with the present—we look back and find ourselves a portion of one great providential scheme, in which remote times and remote events have had their share; and we may thus also, in some measure, anticipate futurity, and perceive, in some limited degree, and by some faint light, how the whole system is working in order to accomplish His purposes who has placed man here to fulfil the end of his creation, and to insure the formation of his mind and character.

The day of St. Bartholomew is one of remarkable interest, from having twice been the date of an act of atrocious persecution. It was on that day that the great massacre of the Protestants in Paris stained with the deep guilt of blood both the members of the political government who set on foot such a mode of persecution, and the Church by which it was sanctioned. It was on that day also, at a later period, after the lapse of a century, that in this country two thousand conscientious ministers of the Church of England were ejected in consequence of the operation of the Act of Uniformity. By this enactment, a vast amount of individual suffering was inflicted. Some of the best men of whom the Church of England could then boast were driven from their cures and from their homes; they were made wanderers and exiles and outcasts on the face of the land which their instructions had tended to render more moral and religious; and the foundation was laid of that Nonconformist schism which has existed from that day to this, and with growing strength, and which is one reason why the country presents so divided, so sectarian, so impracticable an appearance as to whatever is connected with religious instruction. And were it not for these particular reasons, the apostolic doctrine of civil government must at all times be an important subject. It is so, because there will ever be found prelates disposed to engage in servile ministrations to the powers that be, who will so misinterpret and twist and strain it as to render it an agency for the subjection of political claims and rights to ecclesiastical considerations. There are statesmen who will make that doctrine

their stalking-horse. While some pervert it, while others strongly protest against it, there must also be generally a large multitude who conscientiously desire to know what it is; and who, when it is ascertained to their conviction, conscientiously desire to abide by it and to act upon it in all their civil and social relations. Now, whether we feel the doctrine as binding on our own consciences or not, it must be a subject of important and interesting consideration, while there are multitudes to whom it is the rule of conscience, to whom it is a portion of that faith through which they hope for salvation. My own notions of the meaning and spirit of the apostle's exhortation in this chapter have, to a great extent, been laid before you. Instead, therefore, of going through it verse by verse, I intend to read to you three different expositions of it, or commentaries upon it; and I shall take them from very different sources. The first that I shall read is that of Dr. Priestley, in his Notes on the Scriptures. He says, on the first four verses of this chapter: "The Jews of that age were, as I have often observed, of a very refractory disposition, exceedingly averse to the Roman government, and pleading conscience in refusing to pay tribute, or showing any other marks of subjection; considering themselves as the subjects of God alone, and that all other authority over them was mere usurpation, and such as ought to be opposed. This spirit would be too apt to spread itself among the Gentile converts, and might bring the Christians in general into inconvenience,"—I do not think the apostles were so apprehensive of "inconvenience" as the apostolic commentator seems to imply; they certainly braved it on various occasions to a very serious extent,— "especially as, at first, Christianity was considered as nothing more than a sect in Judaism; and it was of the greatest consequence to the success of the Christian cause not to exasperate the Roman government unnecessarily. Besides, at that time, however unjust or despotic the Roman government under Nero might be, it would have been madness to attempt a rebellion. The apostle, therefore, without entering into any question about the nature of government, or in what cases it was lawful, or in what unlawful, considered it as the duty of Christians to submit to that government which they found established, and which

all their efforts would not have been able to overturn. He represents the government they were under as that to which the providence of God had thought fit to subject them, and in which they ought to acquiesce as such." This is written rather loosely, although in general its spirit is that of truth. "These maxims, therefore, are to be considered as applying to the particular circumstances of the times in which the apostle wrote, and it is absurd to plead them in favour of a government manifestly unjust and tyrannical, from which it is in the power of the people to relieve themselves. Upon any other maxim, Christians ought to be universally passive, and bear every wrong and insult, without using the means which God has given them to obtain redress. Besides, what the apostle says, if interpreted literally, relates only to such governments as are useful and beneficial,"—this I take to be more to the point than the last remarks,—"a terror to evil-doers, and not to the good. In all matters of a civil nature, Christians, like other men, must act according to the reason that God has given them, and consult their own interest, according to the particular circumstances in which they may find themselves." On the fifth and sixth verses he merely observes, that it is "not for fear of any civil punishment, but out of conscience towards God. Here the apostle, having a view, no doubt, to the case of a just and good government, represents the officers of it as the ministers of God, and acting under him in the lawful discharge of their duty." And, on the eighth verse, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law," he says, "That is, completely discharge and have done with every obligation that you lie under, except that of brotherly love, the obligation to which can never be discharged, but must always remain incumbent on us,"—this is a fine thought;—"and this love, which we ought to keep in continual exercise, is that great principle which will lead to the observance of every relative and moral duty."

Such is the commentary of Dr. Priestley. As a contrast with that, and as giving what may be considered as the authorised exposition of the Church of our own country, I shall read passages from the Homilies, which are put forth, as you know, by authority,—by the highest Church-and-State authority of the realm,—which have been pre-

served, some of them from the time of Edward the Sixth, the remainder from that of Elizabeth, to the present day; and which are, therefore, a much more authentic exposition of the views the Church takes, than any of its individual members at any time can place before the public. One of these, the Homily on Obedience, says: "Let us learn also here by the infallible and undeceivable word of God, that kings, and other supreme and higher officers, are ordained of God, who is most high; and, therefore, they are here taught diligently to apply and give themselves to knowledge and wisdom, necessary for the ordering of God's people, to their governance committed, or whom to govern they are charged of God. And they be here also taught by Almighty God, that they should acknowledge themselves to have all their power and strength, not from Rome, but immediately of God most high. We must refer all judgment to God, to kings and rulers, judges under them, which be God's officers to execute justice; and, by plain words of scripture, have their authority and use of the sword granted from God, as we are taught by St. Paul, that dear and chosen apostle of our Saviour Christ, whom we ought diligently to obey, even as we would obey our Saviour Christ if he were present." The passage which I have read is then quoted at length; and the commentary goes on: "Here let us learn of St. Paul, the chosen vessel of God, that all persons having souls—he excepteth none, nor exempteth none, neither priest, apostle, nor prophet, saith St. Chrysostom—do owe of bounden duty, and even in conscience, obedience, submission, and subjection to the higher powers, which be set in authority by God; forasmuch as they be God's lieutenants, God's presidents, God's officers, God's commissioners, God's judges, ordained of God himself, of whom only they have all their power and all their authority. And the same St. Paul threateneth no less pain than everlasting damnation"—those who were preparing the future translation of the scriptures must have known how much they exaggerated and stretched the meaning of the word used by the apostle—"to all disobedient persons, to all resisters against this general and common authority, forasmuch as they resist not man, but God, not man's device and invention, but God's wisdom, God's order, power, and authority."

In another of the Homilies, on the guilt of rebellion, this doctrine is put yet more strongly. All the evils which mankind suffer are traced to an original rebellion: "The first author of which rebellion, the root of all vices, and mother of all mischiefs, was Lucifer, first God's most excellent creature and most bounden subject, who, by rebelling against the majesty of God, of the brightest and most glorious angel, is become the blackest and most foul fiend and devil; and, from the height of heaven, is fallen into the pit and bottom of hell. Here you may see the first author and founder of rebellion, and the reward thereof; here you may see the grand captain and father of rebels, who, persuading the following of his rebellion against God, their Creator and Lord, unto our first parents Adam and Eve, brought them in high displeasure with God, wrought their exile and banishment out of paradise, a place of pleasure and goodness, into this wretched earth and vale of misery; procured unto them sorrows of their minds, sickness, diseases, death of their bodies; and—which is far more horrible than all worldly bodily mischiefs—he had wrought thereby their eternal and everlasting death and damnation, had not God, by the obedience of his Son Jesus Christ, repaired that which man by disobedience and rebellion had destroyed, and so of his mercy had pardoned and forgiven him;—of which all and singular the premises, the holy scriptures do bear record in sundry places. Thus do you see that neither heaven nor paradise could suffer any rebellion in them, neither be places for any rebels to remain in. Thus became rebellion, as you see, both the first and the greatest and the very root of all other sins, and the first and principal cause both of all worldly and bodily miseries, sorrows, diseases, sicknesses, and death, and—which is infinitely worse than these, as is said—the very cause of death and damnation eternal also. After this breach of obedience to God and rebellion against his majesty, all mischiefs and miseries breaking in therewith, and overflowing the world, lest all things should come unto conclusion and utter ruin, God forthwith, by laws given unto mankind, repaired again the rule and order of obedience, thus by rebellion overthrown; and besides the obedience due unto his majesty, he not only ordained that, in families and households, the wife should be obedient unto her husband, the children

unto their parents, the servants unto their masters, but also, when mankind increased and spread itself more largely over the world, he, by his holy word, did constitute and ordain in cities and countries several and special governors and rulers, unto whom the residue of his people should be obedient."

According to this theory, the fall of man consisted in insubordination to government, and the recovery or redemption of man consists mainly in obedience to political rule and authority. The Homily then quotes the passage which I have read, and another of a similar nature from the writings of St. Peter, and says: "By these two places of the holy scriptures, it is most evident that kings, queens, and other princes (for he speaketh of authority and power, be it in men or women) are ordained of God, are to be obeyed and honoured of their subjects; that such subjects as are disobedient or rebellious against their princes, disobey God and procure their own damnation; that the government of princes is a great blessing of God, given for the common wealth, especially of the good and godly, for the comfort and cherishing of whom God giveth and setteth up princes; and, on the contrary part, to the fear and for the punishment of the evil and wicked. Finally, that if servants ought to obey their masters, not only being gentle, but such as be froward, as well, and much more, ought subjects to be obedient, not only to their good and courteous, but also to their sharp and rigorous princes. It cometh, therefore, neither of chance and fortune (as they term it), nor of the ambition of mortal men and women, climbing up of their own accord to dominion, that there be kings, queens, princes, and other governors over men being their subjects; but all kings, queens, and other governors, are specially appointed by the ordinance of God. And as God himself, being of an infinite majesty, ruleth and governeth all things in heaven and in earth, as the universal monarch, and only king and emperor over all, as being only to take and bear the charge of all; so hath he constituted, ordained, and set earthly princes over particular kingdoms and dominions in earth, both for the avoiding of all confusion, which else would be in the world if it should be without governors, and for the great quiet and benefit of earthly men, their subjects; and also that the princes themselves,

in authority, power, wisdom, providence, and righteousness in government of people and countries committed to their charge, should resemble his heavenly governance, as the majesty of heavenly things may, by the baseness of earthly things, be shadowed and resembled."

And this matter of obedience to a bad as well as a good government is afterwards urged more strenuously: "What shall subjects do, then? shall they obey valiant, stout, wise, and good princes, and contemn, disobey, and rebel against children being their princes, or against undiscreet and evil governors? God forbid! for, first, what a perilous thing were it to commit unto the subjects the judgment which prince is wise and godly, and his government good, and which is otherwise! as though the foot must judge of the head: an enterprise very heinous, and must needs breed rebellion. What an unworthy matter were it, then, to make the naughtiest subjects (and most inclined to rebellion and all evil) judges over their princes, over their government, and over their counsellors, to determine which of them be good or tolerable, and which be evil, and so intolerable that they must needs be removed by rebels; being ever ready, as the naughtiest subjects, soonest to rebel against the best princes, specially if they be young in age, women in sex, or gentle and courteous in government; as trusting by their wicked boldness easily to overthrow their weakness and gentleness, or at the least so to fear the minds of such princes, that they may have impunity of their mischievous doings. But whereas, indeed, a rebel is worse than the worst prince, and rebellion worse than the worst government of the worst prince that hitherto hath been, both rebels are unmeet ministers, and rebellion an unfit and unwholesome medicine to reform any small lacks in a prince, or to cure any little griefs in government. How horrible a sin against God and man rebellion is, cannot possibly be expressed according unto the greatness thereof. For he that nameth rebellion, nameth not a singular or one only sin, as is theft, robbery, murder, and such like; but he nameth the whole puddle and sink of all sins against God and man, against his prince, his country, his countrymen, his parents, his children, his kinsfolks, his friends, and against all men universally: all sins against God and all men heaped together, nameth he that nameth rebellion."

I think I mentioned three commentaries on this passage. By the third I meant that of the apostle himself, that in the concluding part of the chapter, which I have already read to you, and which may be regarded as an exposition of what goes before. Whatever was the doctrine of civil government intended by the apostle, this is his exposition of its principles, and, consequently, his limitation of the subordination which he meant to enforce. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery," and all the commandments, are "comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But, assuredly, the love that submits to the perpetration of injustice, that allows it to be inflicted where that infliction can be prevented, that does not protest against it, and so give to right and justice the power of individual opinion,—such a love does work ill to its neighbour, and therefore comes not within the apostle's description of his great and comprehensive moral principle. The question is—having distributed the chapter, as I think it fairly distributes itself, into the doctrine of civil government and the doctrine of moral principle—the question is, Which of these two is subordinate? Is the first to be interpreted by the second, or is the second to be interpreted by the first? Is any notion attributed to the apostle concerning civil government to be made paramount to his own declaration of his own universal moral principle? or is that moral principle to regulate all that we infer, and all that we practise, in relation to the doctrine of civil government? Now, to make moral principle subordinate to any thing political or civil must make us agree with a system of philosophy like that of Hobbes, which resolves all virtue into compliance with legislative enactment, which makes political authority the ultimate judge of virtue and vice. There is no escaping this, if the apostolic doctrine of civil government, however understood, is made subservient to the apostolic doctrine concerning moral principle. We must then look to laws for the regulation of conscience. Churches, chapels, might then be considered as courts of justice or police-offices, and the functions of priests might be as well practised by lawyers. If the state—as was represented by the philosophers of that class—is really para-

mount,—if the doctrine of civil government, whatever the doctrine may be, is paramount to any moral doctrine,—there is no refuge from these results: he is an honest and virtuous man who does not break the law; and to offend against any law, however iniquitous it may be, is a sure mark of vice, and deserving of punishment in the individual. There are few who can bear consequences of this kind, though there was a time when the Church of England did not shrink from them. It is a doctrine which may do for despots; and they have ever endeavoured to claim the religious principle for the support of their authority, and to have the catechism of obedience enforced on their subjects; hoping thereby to extend the iron rod over the regions of conscience, as well as over the persons and properties of those who were subject to their sway. It is a doctrine which may do, not only for despotism, but for such institutions as the Church of England,—a subservient institution, growing out of political authority, sanctioned by political authority, depending on political authority for the supply of its ministers, and even on legislation, in its ordinances from generation to generation,—living, moving, and having its being in a political atmosphere; and therefore—naturally, perhaps—feeling bound so to interpret religion and morality as best to answer the purposes of its political creators and supporters.

But, however such a doctrine may do for despotism, or for subservient ecclesiastical institutions, it will never do for humanity. The human mind, heart, and conscience have ever rebelled against it, and ever will rebel. They have always tended towards one of the two great views of morality which are combined in the exposition of his own meaning that the apostle has given us in the verses I last read. He there resolves all morality into love, all social obligation into the love of our neighbour; but he treats the subject in such a way, and it is so treated in other parts of the scriptures also, as to identify Christian morality with that of utilitarianism. Now, there may seem, at first, to be a discrepancy between these two,—the morality of love and the morality of utility; the one may be said to be a matter of impulse, the other altogether a matter of calculation; the one implies a warm, glowing, and generous heart, the other implies a clear and industrious mind, piercing all the deve-

lopment of the consequences which may arise from our actions. But if we look a little further, I think we shall find that these seemingly different principles are really as identical as they are represented to be by the apostle. For what is love, but a blind and ignorant and erring principle, if it has not the guidance of intelligence towards the sure and benignant accomplishment of its own affectionate purposes? And what will any extent of intellect, what will any development of the consequences of actions, do towards the formation of a character that the good can regard with the highest degree of complacency, unless its calculations have some radiance shed over them by the light and warmth of love; unless men's feelings, as well as their external circumstances, be taken into account in this utilitarian calculation? The most correct calculator of consequences will fail in his work, unless he throw something of heart and soul into his estimate, into his judgment, of others; unless he regard their feelings, and stimulate his own; and unless, in all the views which he takes of moral character, and of ultimate consequences, he considers how human beings, with emotions like himself, will feel in the position in which he places them, and how their happiness will be best secured thereby. While, on the other hand, what a chapter might be filled with the errors of ignorant love; with the misery which it has created, in its attempt to alleviate suffering; with the good which it has missed, in its endeavour to realise the largest extent of enjoyment! Foremost in such a chapter would be the history of the benevolent Spanish monk, Las Casas; who, grieved to the very heart by the degradation and suffering to which the natives in the then newly discovered region of America were reduced by their Spanish oppressors, suggested, in his kindness to them, the introduction of slaves from Africa, in order to take the heaviest portion of the toil, and relieve the Indians from the wretchedness which had so attracted his philanthropic feelings; and thus laid the foundation of a traffic more fruitful of blood and misery, and deep and wide-spreading degradation, than was the evil he thought to diminish.

The calculations of utilitarians are good in proportion as they are recognised; they are the guides of feelings; they choose for them the channels where they should run; they

give the impetus of force, power, and reality of contemplated results to the most generous exertions. A writer whom I have occasionally found it desirable to quote, and who is deserving of very general esteem, has a discourse on the early portion of the chapter I have just read to you, in which he traces the application of this principle of utilitarian morality to civil government. The author to whom I refer is Robert Robinson; a man of great and almost unbounded popularity in his own day, or in a portion of his own day, but whose spirit, being too free for the restraints and bounds of sectarian connection, at length became, and has remained in his works, unowned by party; going too far for one sect, and not far enough for another sect, and thus having less of that attention which—for the simple, free, and lofty spirit in which they are generally written—his writings deserve. In his sermon—the text of which consists of the first seven verses of the 13th chapter of Romans—he says: "In general, the goodness of a government depends on two things,—the good *principles* which constitute it, and the proper *powers* that realise these principles, and reduce them to practice in actual administration. Mankind have certain native, inherent rights; securities of these rights are the first principles of a good constitution; but, as the best constitution, like every thing human, may degenerate, a government is only good when it retains power to reduce its principles to practice. To be more particular: that we call a good government which places the *person* of each individual in security. This article includes the life and limbs, the health and reputation, of every innocent member of society. *Powers* that preserve all these *are of God;* for these are his gifts, and they are the natural rights of all mankind.

"Again, that is a good civil government which insures to the citizen his personal *liberty*, and subjects none to the fear of arbitrary imprisonment or exile. How miserable are those countries in which innocent subjects may be instantly deprived of their liberty, rent from their families, and driven either to perish in a dungeon or to quit their native soil, at the despotical mandate of a passionate ruler!

"A good civil government protects each individual in the absolute enjoyment and disposal of his *property*. Property is the ground of power; and power will always follow pro-

perty. A people who would enjoy freedom can never be too cautious in disposing of their property. While they hold it themselves, they hold the golden sceptre of government; when they transfer it to their rulers, and alienate it from themselves, they exchange that sceptre of gold for a rod of iron, which, not unfrequently, smites and punishes them for their folly.

"That is a good civil government which allows and protects the right of *conscience*. This is one of the dearest rights of an intelligent being; and the fullest enjoyment of it cannot, in a well-ordered state, include any civil disability; on the contrary, a good conscience is the best qualification of a magistrate. Nothing can contribute more to the moral good of a nation, than freeing conscience from all human restraints; and it may justly be questioned, whether the sad want of religious principle, and the consequent depravity of manners, of which some whole nations complain, be not in a great measure owing to arbitrary impositions on conscience—the setting of human authority in this throne of Almighty God.

"That we rightly deem a good civil government which renders *justice* cheap to the poor, easy to the illiterate, accessible to all. No government can be good unless it includes a universal responsibility, and provides for the display of public virtue, or the detection of public iniquity, by subjecting all to account for the wealth, the power, and the trust committed to them for the general good. Government is so far perfect or imperfect as it renders the calling of administrators to account easy or difficult.

"These are a few outlines of such a government as St. Paul meant in the text. To such a government, and to no other, do his propositions agree. Let us suppose a state the reverse of all this, and let us see how little like a man, a Christian, or an apostle, St. Paul would seem, were he to speak thus: *The powers that be are ordained of God* to imprison, to banish, and to kill the citizens. *Whosoever resisteth the power* that oppresseth the consciences and wastes the property of the people, *resisteth the ordinance of God. Let every soul be* so *subject to* these *higher powers,* as to place them above the reach of law—beyond the power of all human restraint.

"Alas! how little must they know the apostle, who

imagine he taught such a doctrine as this! His gospel would then have been *yea*, and his politics *nay*,—that is, the one would have consisted of principles the most just and liberal; the other, of principles directly opposite: and had power once protected the iniquitous side, there would not have remained to mankind in future so much as one gleam of hope of redemption from abounding vice and misery."

There are many reasons why, whatever the apostolic doctrine of civil government was, it was not prominent in their teachings. They had a mission of more importance than any change that could then be contemplated in any of the governments of the earth, even in that of the Roman masters of the world. They had a mission, the accomplishment of which would disseminate knowledge and principle abroad—that would ultimately tend to the amelioration of institutions. And, besides, as we see intimations in the chapter which we have read, they were in a state of expectancy of the personal return of Christ at no distant period, when, according to their views, human governments would be superseded, and the reign of truth and righteousness on the earth would commence, as identifying his personal authority. But in times like our own, and under the ordinary course of events, and with the power which opinion has since gained, imposing thereby obligation and duty, as well as exercising power, it becomes a practical question, how far each individual should direct his own mind to the investigation of the question which was discussed in the sermon from which I have just read an extract,—that is, how far each should give himself to political considerations and interests. This question must, of course, be solved very differently by different persons, in different situations of life. It can only be satisfactorily solved by each one for himself; but I apprehend that, by throwing out a few hints on this subject, I shall best render the remarks that have already been made, subservient to the purposes of individual and personal accomplishment. It is evident, then, that every man's attention to politics must be limited by the claims of his daily vocations,—that it would little avail him—that it cannot be an interest, and, consequently, cannot be a duty—to sacrifice those who are altogether dependent upon him, to that on which his own action can be only feeble and remote. Most persons, by their circumstances, are laid under the necessity

of a certain degree of exertion. Their time, their powers, are mortgaged even for the support of their own physical existence, and for that of the individuals who may be dependent upon their exertions. They should attend to this, not only as those who so far are doomed to the destiny of beasts of burden, but as rational and intelligent creatures. The admonition is good: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" and it should be done, not with our might only, but with our rationality also. Many occupations by which persons gain their subsistence may obviously require, not only the devotion of so much time to them, but the devotion of so much mind also. This is obvious at once of a professional vocation—of those who are connected with the teaching of others; where nothing can be more pernicious than that one generation should go on after another, pursuing methods merely because they have been adopted, without any attention to their improvement, without any exercise of their intelligence, in order to render them as efficient as possible, and adapt them to the present growth of knowledge and science, and the more enlightened views that may prevail on the subject of instruction. But even in vocations different from such as this, in those which are strictly mechanical, what is unskilled labour worth, as compared with skilled labour, in any department whatsoever? The power of machinery is continually competing with man, and most successfully and crushingly competing with man, where man only does the work which is analogous to that of the machine —where he merely labours with bone and muscle, and not by the power of intellectual application also. Much may be done in the most mechanical departments of human occupation, if men will throw their minds into them, as well as their bones and sinews: much may labour be lightened, and leisure secured, by such an application of the intellectual powers. Instead of this, unfortunately, it is too often the case, that the prejudices of men, the prejudices of those who are engaged in lives of labour, obstruct the improvements that are going on, present the most formidable barrier to them, and thus really keep up an amount of human labour that is unnecessary for realising the means of subsistence and the enjoyment of life. The mind should be thrown into all this. Man should never forget that he

is an intelligent being. In the realisation of the means of support, and in the distribution of those means, too, his intellect should be employed; and how much would the enjoyment of all classes be advanced were it so, and were those systems of combination adopted that occasion a certain amount of expense to double or triple its power of ministering to human wants! And in the light in which I am now viewing it, all this becomes not merely a burden imposed—not merely a task which must be got through any how—but it is the only mode of contributing towards the well-being of society—it is the only way in which man coöperates with man to answer the purposes for which communities exist—to which, therefore, his mind should be directed, and with which the application of his time and attention to remoter objects of political association should not interfere. They are limited by what must be due to this: they are limited also by what is due to his own intellectual improvement. Man must give not only to his body, but to his soul, food and raiment. He has not only to act as a rational being in his department, though it be only one of material labour, but he has also to qualify himself to act as a rational being in any department.

Surrounded as we are in the present day by libraries, and by accessible collections of works of art, and with literature reduced to an almost unprecedented cheapness —with advantages which have never been enjoyed by any preceding generation—there are few on whom we need hesitate to enforce intellectual cultivation as an obligation, the neglect of which, in their circumstances, however confined, should subject them to self-reproach and conscious degradation—there are few on whom we may not enforce, not only the general duty of mental improvement, by whatever means come within their grasp, but to whom we might not say that they should have some particular object of intellectual pursuit. There are few who should be without this—there are few who should look at mere amusement as the great object of intellectual research—there are few who should not specially direct themselves to some one portion of that great, that interminable region, which they can make their own, and wherein, if they have not the glory of discoverers, they may yet arrive at such degrees of sound information as will qualify them for useful mental

communion with their fellow-creatures. If it be not so, why are we surrounded with researches made popular to the plainest capacity in every department of science—grand and sublime truths brought home to the mind, so that he who runs may read; while skill which can master the principles by which the simplest mechanical operations are conducted, may enable us to comprehend something of the great machinery of the solar system and of the starry regions? Why has chemistry advanced in its analysis of substances, detecting those which seem the most minute and evanescent, and laying bare the elemental principles of nature, so that in no very long space of time, and by no very laborious mode of research, almost any mind may gain for itself an insight into the construction of this great frame of being, which, to the philosophers of old, was an inscrutable mystery? Why, also, have we the means of tracing the history of past times—of ranging before us the men and events of other days—of subjecting history to our cognisance—of selecting those whom we would venerate as the exemplars of humanity —and of deriving, from the changing state of things that has hitherto been exhibited, lessons the most momentous in their application to the present and the future? These are brought home to man as with the voice of an angel, commanding him to arise, and to discharge his duty in cultivating that portion of the vast field of knowledge for which he is the most advantageously situated—and to regard this, too, as a paramount duty to that which merely relates to the slow and gradual, though extensive, reforms of political institutions. Attention to this matter should be limited also by regard to the moral and religious improvement of the individual. It cannot be disguised—nay, it ought to be diligently set forth—that a strong interest in social evils, and in their remedies, is attended with numerous and powerful temptations—that antagonistic passions are often excited more strongly than it becomes benevolent men to feel them, more strongly than he should allow who would have his own bosom the seat of peace, and would have within himself a permanent repose. Partisanship, on the other hand, is stimulated also, and the mind is often tempted to overlook that on the one hand which it would denounce on the other; while truthfulness is almost always sacrificed in the processes of political argumentation.

We cannot but be struck, in attending to the orations of the leaders of all parties, with the general, the almost universal, disregard of truthfulness to their own minds in the persuasions or in the arguments which they advance for the sake of their action upon others. Now, in all this we see what a good man should diligently shun—what he should hold himself pure from—what he should turn his mind from whenever he is involved in such collisions, in order, with alacrity, as he values his safety and his progress, to hold communion with nature, and with the God of nature, with his own heart, and with those essential principles of humanity which raise him far above the low motives and low collisions and weapons which are employed in these struggles. He should be capable of rising to a state of peace comparable to that of the first martyr, who, while he was before the Sanhedrim, arrayed in all the pomp of their judicial authority—who, while the shouts of his enemies were loud and vehement in his ears—who, while the stones were preparing by which he was speedily to be put to a cruel death,—in the midst of all that confusion and uproar saw heaven opened, and delighted himself in the contemplation of celestial peace and glory. But these are only limitations, which assuredly do not lead to the proscription of subjects occupying time, attention, and intellectual exertions, to an extent greater or smaller, according to the circumstances in which each may be placed; and though in one view acting as limitations, in another view they act as impulses. While they tell us there is a limit at which the billows of this stormy sea should pause, they also show us a point towards which they should flow, and to which their tide should reach strongly and triumphantly: for, in proportion as civil government reaches and realises the standard of utility established in the discourse of Robert Robinson, in that proportion will labour be sure of its rights, will the necessity for excessive toil be restrained, will man feel that he is secure, however humble his position, of receiving from society due repayment of the good which he renders to society—in proportion as civil government realises these useful qualities, will the mind be energetic in its operation, will the character of literature rise higher and higher in its worth, will man's reasoning powers be applied yet more

freely to the speculations of free and daring minds, will the contribution of thoughts flow in more amply to the common treasury; and, while the general intellectual wealth of a country advances, a corresponding mental prosperity will be felt by the individuals of whom it is constituted; and in proportion as civil government realises these useful qualities, will religion itself become more simple and pure, morality become more lofty and generous, and the national character bear the highest and noblest stamp of humanity. Political freedom, civil government, may be things of earth; and religion and morality may be things of heaven. Light is from heaven; but it is only as the earth reflects that light, that its proper influence and beauty are perceived—it is only as the earth reflects that light, that the rich variety of colouring spreads itself over nature, by which men's eyes are rejoiced and their hearts are gladdened, and they are formed to the experience of a simpler and purer kind of pleasure than the grosser senses can minister—it is as that light is reflected from the earth, that the earth itself becomes visible to other planetary bodies, that they see it rolling on lustrous in its appointed orbit, and number it with the stars of heaven that proclaim the glory of their Creator.

EXPOSITION OF THE HUNDRED-AND-SEVENTH PSALM.

August 26th, 1838.

My design in the present lecture is a brief exposition of the 107th Psalm, considering that Psalm as one of the indications of the notions particularly entertained by the Jews of the doctrine of Divine Providence. In the expository lectures which I have at different times delivered, it has always been a prominent object with me to inquire into the date of the composition of the book from which the passage taken for exposition was selected. There is no book in which such an inquiry is more desirable than concerning the Psalms—the Psalms of David, as they are frequently indiscriminately called—a comparatively small portion of them being really the composition of David—perhaps about one-half, or scarcely so many, of the entire number. This chronological inquiry might be applied to the book of Psalms with a more extensively useful result than perhaps to any other book of the Old Testament; because the compositions which it comprises stretch over so long a period. Not only is the whole book not to be assigned to any particular date in Jewish history, but the Psalms which are there collected together extend themselves from the time of Moses, perhaps even before his time, down to the period immediately subsequent to the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity; and, could the power of criticism assign to each composition its date and author, the results would be of high interest. We should then be able to trace the Jewish theology through the long course of its growth, and through a great variety of its most important phases: we should trace that theology, not merely as it existed in direct religious teaching—not merely as it was embodied in laws, institutions, and ceremonial practices—

not merely as it was professed as a matter of faith—but as it was realised, at least by the individual authors of the Psalms, as a matter of feeling; we should behold their theology, in its different gradations, in connection with the strongest emotions that they experienced; we should see this or that form of the doctrine of Providence, for instance, associated with feelings of different periods; and we should also trace its influence upon different characters when struggling amid different circumstances. Such a practical delineation of theology—such an exhibition, not merely of the outward husk and form of the conventionally recognised arrangements of religion, but of its vitality, of its power over the emotions of the heart—would form a most interesting chapter in the records of human nature. In the distribution thus made, there would still remain an amply sufficient number of Psalms connected with the name of David to sustain our interest in him as preëminently the "sweet singer of Israel." We might arrange his compositions biographically, so as to correspond with the adventures of his romantic life—with the successive stages that were passed through by the shepherd-boy tending his father's flock in the wilderness, and guarding it from the attacks of wild beasts—the young military hero, whilst yet a stripling, going forth as the champion of his country against the Philistine warrior who defied the hosts of Jehovah—the favourite at court, the minstrel of Saul, charming away the demon of melancholy by which the monarch was oppressed—the friend of Jonathan in the various adventures which arose out of that remarkable illustration of the power of friendship in antique times—the outlaw, the harassed and hunted outlaw, upon the mountains, gathering around him a band of desperate men, and sustaining himself through a succession of adventures—and then the pretender, and finally the successful competitor, for the throne of Israel, where his latter days were passed amid the pomp and splendour of the palace. We might find, probably, indications of feelings appropriate to these different periods of life and different scenes of adventure beautifully delineated in the several Psalms that would be assigned to these successive times. We might trace the first dawnings of his mind, the first outpourings of his soul in song, in those contemplations of the starry heavens moving over his head in the silent majesty of

night, as he watched by his flocks, and when his notions of human dominion seem to have contemplated, as its grandest exhibition, supremacy over the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. We might find in such Psalms as those descriptive of pastoral life and care, in the confidence expressed in the Lord as his shepherd that he should not be allowed to want, and that no fear should assail him even in the dark valley of the shadow of death,—we might find in these, not allusions to contemporaneous circumstances, but the reversion of his mind to the scenes of his boyhood—the vivid contemplations with which the monarch in his palace was accustomed to brood upon the occupations of his earlier years—the way in which his mind, feeling itself failing and sinking, realised in memory the strength of his youth, and the innocence and delights that then encompassed him.

In a selection and arrangement of the Psalms indubitably belonging to David, there would, I think, be ample evidence to justify the eulogium which has been passed upon him by one of the best and purest of our living poets, although in the foundation of that eulogium were included some compositions which biblical criticism must assign to different authors. The characteristics of David's poetry, of his Psalms, are thus described by the author of the *Pleasures of Hope* and *Gertrude of Wyoming*: "His traits of inspiration are lovely and touching, rather than daring and astonishing. His voice, as a worshiper, has a penetrating accent of human sensibility, varying from plaintive melancholy to luxuriant gladness, and even rising to ecstatic rapture. In grief, his 'heart is melted like wax, and deep answers to deep, whilst the waters of affliction pass over him;' or his soul is led to the green pastures by the quiet waters; or his religious confidence pours forth the metaphors of a warrior in rich and exulting succession: 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.' Some of the sacred writers may excite the imagination more powerfully than David, but none of them appeal more interestingly to the heart. Nor is it in tragic, so much as in joyous expression, that I conceive the power of his genius to consist. Its most inspired aspect appears to present

itself when he looks abroad upon the universe with the eye of a poet, and with the breast of a glad and grateful worshiper. When he looks up to the starry firmament, his soul assimilates to the splendour and serenity which he contemplates. This lofty but bland spirit of devotion reigns in the eighth and in the nineteenth Psalms. But, above all, it expands itself in the hundred and fourth into a minute and diversified picture of the creation. Verse after verse in that Psalm leads on the mind through the various objects of nature as through a mighty landscape; and the atmosphere of the scene is coloured, not with a dim or mystic, but with a clear and warm light of religious feeling. He spreads his sympathies over the face of the world, and rejoices in the power and goodness of its protecting Deity. The impression of that exquisite ode delights the heart with a pleasure too instinctive and simple to be described."

The Psalm which is thus characterised—the last mentioned—was not, I apprehend, the composition of David, however much some of his well-authenticated odes may justify such language; and—not the least interesting consequence of such a distribution and arrangement of the Psalms as I have been describing—the consequence would be this,—that we should find traits of individuality; that in the compositions we linked together as the work of the same hand, we should find traces of the peculiarities of intellectual and moral and religious character of their author, even where his name has not been preserved to us, and where only the internal evidence of the compositions could guide us in assigning them to the same pen.

It seems to me that the six Psalms from the 102d to the 107th inclusively bear marks of the same writer. They all, I believe, with the exception of one, contain evidence that cannot be resisted of a much later period of composition than the age of David. They belong to the captivity, to the return from the captivity, and to the time which immediately succeeded. They breathe at the outset the air of Babylon, they lead us through the wilderness back to Judæa, and they commemorate the rising out of the ruins of the city and temple of Jerusalem. The author, whoever he was, seems to me undoubtedly to have been one of the captives, to have been of considerably advanced age when these Psalms were written,

and when the distinct hope of return broke in upon his mind and that of his countrymen, to have shared with them in the perils of recrossing the wilderness from Babylon to Jerusalem, and to have partaken of the gladness with which the second temple universally inspired the Jewish people. And in these six Psalms, which we are led to assign, not I think to Nehemiah himself, because they differ in some respects from the composition of his historical book, but to some one of his companions—in these Psalms there are many marks of a peculiar and strong feeling and of an extensive range of thought. The first of them, the 102d Psalm, appears to have been written towards the close of the time of captivity, but when there was not yet any very distinct apprehension of the way in which their restoration should be effected. The writer said that the time announced by the prephets was on the eve of its fulfilment; and he felt that faith in the realisation of the promise which characterised the whole of the Jewish people. He seems to have doubted whether his own life would be prolonged to share in it; for, at the eleventh verse, he says:

"My days are like a declining shadow,
And I wither like grass.
But thou, O Jehovah, endurest for ever,
And thy name from generation to generation.
Thou wilt arise and have pity upon Zion;
For the time to favour her, yea, the appointed time, is come.
For thy servants take pleasure in her stones;
Yea, they have a regard for her dust.
Then shall the nations revere Jehovah's name,
And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
For Jehovah will build up Zion;
He will appear in his glory."

I read these Psalms from the American translation of Noyes—the best, I believe, that has been made. After this expression of his apprehensiveness, he introduces a well-known passage quoted in the New Testament, and which strongly reflects the energy of his faith, though it might then be enshrined in a feeble bodily frame:

"My strength faileth by the way,
My days are shortened.
I say, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days,
Thou, whose years are everlasting!
Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth,

And the heavens are the work of thy hands;
They shall perish, but thou shalt endure;
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
Thou shalt change them as a vesture, and they shall be changed;
But thou art for ever the same;
Thy years shall have no end!"

In the next Psalm, the 103d, he appears to have felt himself invigorated in body and mind, and to have had the prospect of a speedy reëstablishment of the Jewish polity. It breathes a different spirit, although the feeling is so far identical that we can have no hesitation in referring them to the same author. It commences with an overflow of grateful acknowledgment:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless his holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits!
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from the grave;
Who crowneth thee with kindness and mercy;
Who satisfieth thine old age with good,
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Joy in the prospects of his country evidently blends here with the feelings of the individual. It is a beautiful picture of the power of the mind, of hope, of authenticated expectation about to be realised, diffusing itself as it were through the whole mental and bodily constitution, and bringing forth strains of gladness from one who had recently touched deep notes of lamentation. In the view of this return, his conceptions of the love and mercy of the Deity seem to expand themselves in correspondence with the changing state of his emotions:

"As high as are the heavens above the earth,
So great is his mercy to them that revere him.
As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
Even as a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that revere him.
For he knoweth our frame,
He remembereth that we are dust."

The next Psalm in this collection, which I have ventured to ascribe to the same writer, is that which the poet

Campbell has selected as the subject of eulogy, on the supposition of its being written by David. It manifestly stands here in its proper place, and was one of those excursions of mind into which a state of devotional and grateful feeling naturally led the writer amid the reviving prospects of his nation. It commences with a magnificent description of the Deity:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul!
O Jehovah, my God! how great art thou!
Clothed with glory and majesty!
He covereth himself with light as with a garment;
He spreadeth out the heavens like a curtain;
He buildeth his chambers on the waters;
He maketh the clouds his chariot;
He rideth upon the wings of the wind.
He maketh the winds his messengers,
The flaming lightnings his ministers.
He establisheth the earth on its foundations;
It shall not be removed for ever."

The 105th Psalm is taken in part, in its earlier portion, from one of the Psalms of David, unless it be, as some have imagined, transferred from the subsequent history into its place here. It is chiefly remarkable for the sense of the sacredness of the Jewish people which the writer expresses; his confidence, whatever captivity or calamity they might endure, that they were yet peculiarly under the care of God:

"When yet they were few in number,
Very few, and strangers in the land;
When they went from nation to nation,
From one kingdom to another people,
He suffered no man to injure them,
Yea, he rebuked kings for their sakes.
'Touch not,' said he, 'mine anointed,
And do my prophets no harm!'"

The 106th Psalm seems intended to moderate the exultation of the people in their deliverance, by reminding them, with a warning voice, of the transgressions of their ancestors. It recounts the offences which they committed in their passage from the wilderness of Sinai, amid dangers analogous to those which they had to encounter on their return from Babylon. And then comes the Psalm which I have selected as the subject of the present exposition. It divides itself into seven portions, which may be called the

redemption, the wilderness, the captivity, the soul-sinking, the tempest, the reëstablishment.

In the first of these divisions—the first three verses—the writer's mind is altogether occupied in the gathering together of the captives, and their reëmbodiment into a people, a nation, a race; their being given up by their masters and oppressors wherever they had been located throughout the vast extent of the Babylonian empire; and their coming again as the seed of Abraham, as the heirs of the patriarchs, as the former possessors of the promised land, into the renewed possession of their inheritance among the nations of the earth:

> "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
> For his mercy endureth for ever!
> Let the redeemed of the Lord say it,
> Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;
> Whom he hath gathered from various lands,
> From the east, the west, the north, and the south."

His mind then reverts to their march back, their pilgrimage across the wild and dreary desert which interposed between the scene of their captivity and that of their native land: and the passage by a large multitude through such a wilderness was in those days an enterprise of no ordinary interest and peril. They had to prepare themselves for the endurance of long fatigue and unknown danger. There was but one city of any account which lay near their route—the Tadmor-in-the-Wilderness that had been founded by Solomon, and which still attracts the attention of travellers in the ruins of Palmyra; and there they had reason rather to apprehend hostility than to reckon on friendship and hospitality, as the inhabitants had shown themselves ill-disposed towards them in the conflict which led to their captivity—as, indeed, they did on subsequent occasions. The writer then adverts to the perils and dangers of this passage:

> "They were wandering in a solitary desert,
> They found no way to an inhabited city.
> They were hungry and thirsty,
> And their souls fainted within them.
> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
> And he delivered them out of their distress.
> He led them in a straight way,
> Till they came to an inhabited city.

O let them praise the Lord for his goodness,
For his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he satisfieth the thirsty,
And the hungry he filleth with good."

These lines—

"O let them praise the Lord for his goodness,
For his wonderful works to the children of men!"—

are introduced repeatedly as a sort of burden to this ode, and have probably a reference to its musical recitation. It is one of the peculiarities and of the beauties of the composition, that the writer, in each case, does not wind up his sentences with it, but he follows it by some expression of gratitude which is peculiarly appropriate to the lines that have preceded. Here, having described their sufferings by hunger and thirst in the desert, he exclaims afterwards:

"For he satisfieth the thirsty,
And the hungry he filleth with good."

And this peculiarity is to be traced in each subdivision of the Psalm.

The next may be called the captivity. It describes their condition in Babylon—their forlorn condition—of which in modern times we can scarcely form any adequate notion—that to which all families alike, the loftiest and the lowliest, were liable, when they were overrun by invading armies—that of being torn away entirely from their native soil, of being carried to a distant and strange country, of being there parcelled out as slaves amongst its inhabitants, of being there reduced to the meanest and basest occupations, and sometimes of being treated in the most harsh and cruel manner for their offences, real or imaginary:

"They dwelt in darkness and the shadow of death,
Having been bound with grievous irons;
Because they disobeyed the commands of God,
And contemned the will of the Most High;
Whose hearts he brought down by hardship;
Who sank, and there was none to help.
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
And he saved them from their distress;
He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,

And brake their bands asunder.
O let them praise the Lord for his goodness,
For his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath broken the gates of brass,
And cut the bars of iron asunder."

The burden is here again followed by an appropriate allusion to the subject of that division. In the next portion of it, the writer describes the internal effects of slavery, in addition to its external sufferings. He depicts that sinking of heart which the Jewish captives felt, and which is so strongly portrayed in another Psalm, when their oppressors called on them to sing the songs of Judah, and they refused to touch in a strange land the harps which they had hung upon the willows:

"Fools, because of their transgressions,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted:
They abhorred all kinds of good;
They were near to the gates of death;
Then they cried to Jehovah in their trouble,
And he delivered them from their distress.
He sent his word, and healed them,
And saved them from destruction.
O let them praise the Lord for his goodness,
For his wonderful works to the children of men!
Let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare his works with joy!"

The next division refers to perils on the ocean. Whether any portion of the passage of the Jewish emigrants from the land of their captivity to their own country was made by water, beyond their unavoidable crossing of the river Euphrates, we have no means for deciding. It does not seem necessary that it should. Perhaps, however, in their state of slavery, some of them had been employed under the Babylonian authorities for maritime purposes,—a mode of occupation that, from the want of being habituated to it amongst the Jewish people, must have been to them one of peculiar irksomeness and of extraordinary terror, which may well account, perhaps, for the language that is here employed:

"They who go down to the sea in ships,
And do business in great waters,
These see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep.
He biddeth, and the tempest ariseth,

And swelleth high the waves.
They mount up to the heavens;
They sink down to the depths;
Their soul melteth with distress;
They reel and stagger like a drunken man,
And all their skill is vain.
Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble,
And he saveth them from their distress.
He turneth the storm into a calm,
And the waves are hushed.
The mariners rejoice that they are still,
And he bringeth them to their wished-for haven.
O let them praise the Lord for his goodness,
For his wonderful works to the children of men!
Let them extol him in the congregation of the people,
And praise him in the assembly of the elders!"

Having thus reviewed the calamities of their captive condition, and the dangers and perils of their migration homewards, the writer contemplates the prospect of a new city rising from the ruins—of a land redeemed from its desolate state, and brought afresh into cultivation, and richly repaying the toil of cultivation—of a society, of a polity, springing up, and taking root, and flourishing, and causing abundance, where there had in intervening years been nothing but sterility and desolation; and with this thanksgiving the Psalm concludes:

"He turneth rivers into a desert,
And water-springs into dry ground;
A fruitful land into sterility,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
He turneth the desert into a lake of water,
And dry ground into water-springs;
And there he causeth the hungry to dwell,
And they build a city for habitation;
And sow fields and plant vineyards,
Which shall yield a fruitful increase.
He blesseth them, so that they multiply greatly,
And suffereth not their cattle to decrease.
When they are diminished and brought low,
By oppression, affliction, and sorrow,
He poureth contempt upon princes,
And causeth them to wander in a pathless wilderness;
But he raiseth the destitute from affliction,
And increaseth their families like a flock.
The righteous see it and rejoice,
And all the unrighteous shut their mouths.
Whoso is wise, let him observe this,
And have regard to the goodness of Jehovah!"

In this way did the writer express his view of Providence; and the notion that he has embodied forms one in a succession of notions which, in the same order, have occupied men's thoughts, and changed their faith, in different states of society, and which, perhaps, have a tendency to repeat that succession in the mind of the individual,—giving us first the infantile notion, and then gradually expanding it until we arrive at the best and most philosophical conception of the matured spirit. There are six different conceptions of Providence which, in the same order, thus follow one another. The first is that of unexpected external event. It is interruption that gives the child, or the savage, or man in any state where he has not been stimulated to thought, his first ideas of Providence—it is the interruption of that to which he is accustomed, that impresses his mind first with the notion of a superintending, or rather, in this case, merely an interfering Power. In the peal of thunder, for which he sees no adequate cause —in the devastating stroke of the lightning—in the wild fury of the tempest—in the terrors of the earthquake, and the desolation of the pestilence—in these man first acknowledges a God or gods ruling over the earth; or, as to what is nobler and gentler, he finds that Providence in any unexpected accession of good to himself or those around him—in the more than ordinary fruitfulness of the trees from which he gathers the means of sustenance, or of the field which he has learnt rudely to cultivate; he beholds Heaven's pledge and promise in the rainbow—he feels the presence of God in the returning mildness of spring and in the glow of summer; and in those inventions and discoveries which have the appearance of accident, in the knowledge of the use of metals, or in the application of the observations of the stars to the guidance of his bark in its timid coasting voyages,—in these he hears the voice of inspiration, and recognises a wisdom superior to his own.

The external interruption of the ordinary course of events is the first suggestion of Providence to human thought. The next step is that of external national history, and it is upon this view that the Psalm which has just been read chiefly expatiates. All tribes have their histories, even before written documents are introduced and preserved; there is

a tradition linking generation with generation, and keeping alive some sense of identity in a particular race, or people: and this was stronger in ancient times than in modern, because identity of blood, of descent, of race, was then very often connected with society; nor was society so large, with the exception of two or three great empires, that for a time made themselves the most conspicuous objects in the world, but that the mind might readily grasp it and regard it as one and indivisible. Now, here would be traced a broad line of exaltation and of depression, of joy and of calamity. Here would be something like cause and effect observed on a scale that was calculated to impress the mind. When Nebuchadnezzar overran kingdom after kingdom—when he triumphed over all that had been deemed the most sacred in Judæa, and carried away its holy vessels, together with its princes and its priests, into captivity—when he exalted himself in his glory as the founder of a monument that was to endure through all ages—when, in the midst of this display, he was brought low, and the insanity seized him that sent him forth from the throne and the palace to herd among the beasts of the field,—all could behold a stronger intervention than that of humanity —all could recognise a present God. And thus would it be with the broad events of national history—with those which subsequently followed—with the restoration of the Jewish people, and their returning prosperity—with the sweeping of Alexander, like a storm, across the regions of the East—with the uprising of Rome to claim the dominion of the world; these would cause them to exclaim, "There is a God that judgeth in the earth—Jehovah, most high over all the nations of the earth."

But still—except when patriotism was at its most enthusiastic height—this would be but a comparatively cold feeling. It would want something of satisfying the individual human heart; and, accordingly, we find it succeeded by the third notion, that of the individual external—in which the destiny of each person was regarded as the work of Heaven. This was first most clearly and distinctly taught by Christ; and, however much beyond this the Christian doctrine of Providence and the principles which he inculcated may go, this was, perhaps, the chief lesson which was immediately learnt by those

who first received Christianity; and it was an exalting idea for them when man, when each individual, even the lowliest, learnt that he was an object of the divine care, of providential government,—when he heard even of helpless children, that their angels did behold the face of God in heaven; a notion of worth must have been imparted to the mind, a feeling of self-respect generated—one of the best securities from base deeds—one of the best pledges of noble thoughts and exertions—when man was made to feel that, however his earthly superiors might despise him, however power might treat him as a mere tool to work with, or a slave to be bought and sold, still God was his guardian, his shepherd, guide, protector, and friend. In this he would find dignity—in this he would find virtue. Here would be a charm for him which would raise the whole tone of his thought, and place him on a higher elevation, simply because he had received a clearer notion—had got on one stage further in the enlargement of his conception of Providence. The evil of resting in this view, we find in its tendency to produce the notion of judgment—the connection of calamity with crime; in its leading to censorious reflections upon the sufferings of others, thus adding bitterness to that bitter draught which so many are doomed to drink; and also in its ascription of individual and personal deliverance to some virtue in the individual himself. Accordingly, man's thoughts were not allowed to stay here. They went on from the individual external to the universal external, or that in which all seem to be under the same law, in which the principles that regulate all material actions were one after another detected, and deciphered, and explained, and applied; so that man saw distinctly that what happened to him was in consequence of laws that extended equally to all others—that embraced all bodies in the universe, conscious or unconscious, animate or inanimate.

The advance of science would materially assist, and was indeed the occasion of, this notion of Providence extending itself to men's minds. They were reconciled to that which acted for the production of evil to themselves, by some perception of the general good and the utility of the law which occasioned it. But still the conception itself was a cold and mechanical one. It was rather scientific discovery than devotional feeling. It led men to speak,

as they have spoken, and do speak—those who form their religion on this principle—to the present day, of Jehovah as the Great Geometer; and leads to the regarding of all things that exist, even the heart and feeling of man included, as only a great machine, whose working proceeds with little or no regard to the tendencies of sentient being.

This view, therefore, had to be corrected; and it is, in fact, corrected in the history of opinion by an advance towards the religious internal view of Providence—that which supposes the action of external laws to have regard to human thoughts, to the spiritual condition of humanity—that which has regard, indeed, to only a select portion of the human race, but which in this beholds all things working together for their inward, mental, and religious good—which treats the whole range of universal being as engaged in their service,—in short, the still common notion of divine and preternatural influence in the production of religion in particular individuals; a notion which tended to lead man onward in the truth of his conception, although in itself it is liable to so many objections, and attended with so much drawback, from being associated with partiality in the Deity, in his selection of a favourite class — with the absurdity of the means and agency through which this influence is supposed to be realised—with the fictions of earthly justice in the arrangement by which it describes the outpouring of God's Spirit as purchased from his vindictive justice—and with spiritual pride in the ultimate result by which it appropriates the enjoyment of immortality to a selected class. These degrade the doctrine—they ally it with superstition and fanaticism—they produce some of the worst results that have ever been realised under the name of religion; but still they do not prevent this conception of the divine influence from raising the human notion of divine Providence to a higher stage, and advancing towards the highest, which is that of a universal internal agency, combining all external objects and agencies to realise in the human mind that which its Creator purposed. There is a Providence as extensive in thought as there can be in matter—in inert and unconscious matter. If the growth of the tree from the small seed which is deposited in the

ground be a work not beneath the superintending care of that Infinite Spirit in whom all being exists, much less must this be the case with the growth of the human mind, of any and every human mind, whatever its condition may seem to us, or however much for a time it may be in an apparent state of viciousness or degradation. It may be said, that sometimes the tree only grows to be blighted by the lightning; and it may be asked, Why should this not be the case with human minds? But our reply is, that the constitution of the human mind, if we suppose the heritage of immortality to be universal, precludes this — that in the ages of eternity, the ignorant must acquire wisdom; the thoughtless, reflection; the vicious, goodness; and the miserable achieve their way to happiness. In the boundless combination of circumstances that are to be realised through eternity, there must be those adapted to each particular spirit—there must be those which are adapted to evolve the impulses for which, up to that time, it may have waited, and to send it onward in its spiritual course. God is the universal Father, and the Father of all spirits; and in the combination of these characters, and in their practical results, we trace the best, the most satisfactory notion of divine Providence; which, thus advancing from the mere external accidental, through the external national, the external individual, the external universal, the religious internal, and the universal inward agency of all external objects on each principle of thought and goodness, thus presents to us God and his works as united together by a tie closer than that which binds the parent and the child—by his own principle of intelligence and of goodness being gladly evolved in created being, as created being is enabled to realise its manifestations.

The author of the Psalm which has led to these remarks has passed away; his name, whatever reverence his contemporaries may have paid to it, has not descended to us —it seems to have been unknown even in a few generations after. The temple and city which he aided in rebuilding are vanished too—the ploughshare has passed over their site. But the temple of truth, its eternal and ever-growing temple, which he aided by this composition to build in the thoughts and in the heart of man—that remains; its worship, the homage of the human heart,—its

oracles, the words of wisdom, by whomsoever and whensoever uttered,—its precepts, the great law of love to our fellow-creatures,—and its prophecies, the assurance of universal happiness. He who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, will yet take up his abiding rest in such a temple as this.

ON THE BELIEF IN A DEVIL.

September 2d, 1838.

THROUGHOUT Christendom, the belief prevails in the existence of a malignant spirit, of vast intelligence, of power and influence undefined; originally an angel of God, but who rebelled, and maintains rebellious war, against the Almighty; the chieftain of myriads of spirits like himself, whom he employs as his agents for the promotion of the empire of evil; the seducer of mankind to iniquity here, and the agent of their punishment hereafter.

Whence this belief? what was its source? what is its history? what are its elements? Originally, no doubt, it sprang from the great question with which the reflective have ever been perplexed,—the question of the origin of evil; that question which oppressed men's minds so early in the history of human intelligence, and which has not relaxed its power over their thoughts, even in the most enlightened times, or in the latest ages; that question which is the source of so many of the different superstitions that have prevailed; which we trace alike in connection with the monotheism of Judæa, and with the idolatries of Judæa, of Egypt, of Greece; which we find occupying, in later periods, the discussion of divines and exciting the scoffs of sceptics; which leads some to analyse texts, and others to write commentaries; which calls forth the speculation of the philosopher and the apprehension of the believer;—which, in fact, is the great question about which, when man looks beyond himself, he invents theories in relation to the past, to the invisible, or to the future, and of which perhaps only an approximate solution is ever to be obtained. But I do not consider the subject in relation to this ultimate suggestion of it, but with reference merely to its history as an opinion, of which

an original form may be found in the Jewish records, and which, from that original form, may be traced through different accessions and gradations to the belief which now prevails.

The first notion which we find at all analogous to the modern conception of the devil is in the introduction to the book of Job, where Satan appears as an accusing spirit. I call this the earliest notice, because, whether the second and third chapters of the book of Genesis have an earlier date assigned for their production or not, they seem to me not to interfere with the claim of this passage to represent the earliest belief on the subject. These chapters, as I have endeavoured to show in the expositions lately given of them, were originally a mythos, probably of Egyptian origin, and with no reference whatever to the doctrines which have in later periods been connected with them, and professedly deduced from them. In after times, no doubt, interpreters have found the doctrine of the devil in the description of the serpent that tempted Eve in paradise: but that was not the oldest exposition; it does not seem to have been the prevalent exposition of the Jews at a comparatively recent period; nor, perhaps, was it ever their exposition, until after the hypothesis had been introduced, and had prevailed among them, which threw a reflected light upon that document, and led them to see in the narrative notions which were not originally intended. The introduction of the book of Job is, therefore, our first view of the doctrine of the devil: and here, it may be observed, he is not a fallen spirit, he is not a rebel angel, he is not alienated from heaven, or disobedient to the Almighty. The Satan of the book of Job is merely an angel, the son and servant of God, whose peculiar office is to mark the sins of men, and to accuse them in the court of heaven. The work which he discharges is a duty, the functions which he exercises are acts of obedience. The government of the world, according to the notions of that time, was considered as carried on by the agency of a great number of spirits, sent forth by the supreme God on their different messages of sternness or of benignity. Satan is one of these. At the set time, on rendering up the account of their mission, he presents himself in the divine presence, together with the other sons of God. He there tells how he has been rambling to

and fro and up and down in the earth; and when invited to answer in reference to the character of Job, he declares his suspicions of the firmness of his integrity, and the probability of his being induced to curse his Maker to his face, if calamity and affliction should be heaped upon him. And this, for a long time, was the notion which was entertained amongst the descendants of Abraham, or the Arabians, who were their kindred. There was no reference to any such being as afterwards was contemplated under the different attributes of an opponent and hostile chieftain against the powers of heaven. This notion of an accusing spirit was a painful conception; and could we realise the existence of such a being, we should scarcely class him with the happiest of God's angels or ministers. Whilst the task of others was to console affliction, to strengthen virtue, to uphold the feeble, to animate men in their different trials as they passed through the changes and dangers of life,—his was to pry into their faults, to note their vices, to denounce their offences for punishment, and to call down the vengeance of Heaven upon their transgressions. Such functions tend to generate a desire to find that which it is the office of the agent to expose; they ever have produced a kind of perverse, and to the person himself an unrecognised, delight in the errors of others. We are prepared, therefore, to find that in subsequent times the notion of Satan became that of a depraved being—of one who delighted in wickedness—of one who even tempted into sin, which it was his office to denounce. But that the Jewish notion went no further than this, there is ample proof; and that proof has been collected together, and very distinctly stated, by a divine of the Church of England—by Dr. Russell, the episcopal minister of Leith, in his *Connection of Sacred and Profane History*. As I do not know that the evidence can be better put than as it is arranged by him in that work, I shall read the passage:

"The simple theology which they held prior to the Babylonish captivity taught them that all events—whether prosperous or adverse—proceeded from the direct counsel and appointment of Jehovah,—that good and evil sprang from the same source,—that life and death, heat and cold, light and darkness, pain and enjoyment, were measured out by the same hand, through the instrument-

ality of different agents. Their creed admitted the important tenet, that, among the various orders of intellectual beings superior to man, there were some who delighted in obedience and happiness; while others, actuated by pride and malignity, found their most acceptable employment in directing the arrows of affliction, and in covering with darkness and fear the hearts of the human race. But the Hebrew divines never allowed themselves to doubt that these spirits, as well as the more beneficent ministers of his will, were under the constant and immediate control of the omnipotent God; and that they exceeded not, in the commissions with which they were intrusted, the bounds of his authority, nor extended their destructive services beyond the precise object which they were meant to realise. These evil angels were even understood to occupy a place in the presence of the Eternal, as did the other intelligences who were employed only in messages of goodness; and both were indiscriminately called the sons of God and enrolled in the host of heaven."

He then illustrates this from several passages of the Old Testament; as, for instance, "When Ahab was about to adopt the foolish measures which were made to result in the punishment of his sins, the sacred historian unfolds the counsels of the Almighty in the following terms: 'And Micaiah said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.'

"There is not, in any part of the Old Testament which was written before the captivity, the slightest allusion to Satan as being the head of the malignant angels, or as having set up a kingdom for himself in opposition to the gracious intentions of the Almighty in behalf of man. When, for instance, Abimelech, the son of Gideon, quarrels with the people of Shechem, the compiler of the book of

Judges informs us that 'God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech.' Again, when Saul, the unhappy king of Israel, laboured under the infirmities of a debilitated or melancholy mind, we are told by the sacred annalist that an 'evil spirit from God troubled him.' 'And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our Lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. . . . And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.'"

There is a remarkable instance of the change in the Jewish theology—of the additional idea which the notion of Satan or of the devil gained—in the narratives of the numbering of the people by David, an offence which was visited by pestilence. In the book of Samuel, the oldest record of this transaction, it is merely said, that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." In the book of Chronicles, and after the return from the Babylonian captivity, where the Jews obtained many of the notions about angels and devils which appeared in their subsequent theology, the same event is related thus: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."

Up to this time, then, the notion of the devil or Satan was simply that of an accusing spirit; but of a spirit who did his duty in his accusations. The first great accession which flowed in upon this simple notion was probably derived from Egypt. The Israelites had sojourned there; they had frequent communications with that country. The effects of its mythology are visible in various portions of their history; and it seems not at all unlikely that the attributes of the Egyptian god of evil, Typhon, became, to a certain extent, associated with the Jewish Satan. The Typhon of the Egyptians was the god of physical evil. His province does not appear to have extended to mind or morals; but he

ruled over whatever was conceived to be noxious to humanity, from the malignant influence of evil stars, down to the lowest productions of the earth—the reptile that crawled on its surface, or the poisonous weed that it bore; whatever could interfere with human enjoyment or happiness, by material agency. The account of his attributes, as given by Dr. Prichard, in his work on the Mythology of Egypt, corresponds precisely with the qualities which, in process of time, were attributed to the accusing spirit, the Satan of the Jews. The Egyptian notion is entirely founded on physical principles. "Whatever," says Plutarch, "is turbulent, or noxious, or disorderly, in irregular seasons, or a distempered condition of the air, or in eclipses of the sun and moon, are incursions and representations of Typhon."

"Typhon and Nephthys stand opposed, in every instance, to Osiris and Isis. As all fertile regions and prolific causes belong to the latter, so all sterile and unproductive elements are the peculiar reign of the former. When Osiris is the fertilising Nile, Typhon is the barren sea—the ποντος ἀτρυγετος which swallows it up; and hence the sea, and even the salt which is produced from it, were held in abomination by the Egyptians. When Osiris is water, or humidity in general, Typhon is heat and drought. As the land of Egypt, which is fertilised by the waters of the Nile, was the reign of Isis, so the desert, which lies beyond the genial influence of the river-god, was the unfruitful Nephthys. When these barren tracts were overflowed and rendered fertile by an unusual extent of the inundation, then Osiris was said to leave his garland of melilotus in the bed of Nephthys; and this phenomenon was recorded in the physical allegory of the Egyptians. When Osiris was recognised in the northern or Etesian winds, so salubrious in Upper Egypt, Typhon was the *Tyfoon*, or southern blast, which blows from the desert, and burns up and destroys every thing that has life. Lastly, when Osiris was the light and fire of the sun, Typhon was the darkness of winter, which is predominant from the month of Athyr, when Osiris was overcome by his adversary, until the following spring, when he again returned to Isis, and diffused, in the month of Phamenoth, his genial influence over the sublunary world. 'In short,' says Plutarch, 'every thing that is of an evil or malignant nature, either

in the animal, the vegetable, or the intellectual world, is looked upon in general as the operation of Typhon, as part of him, or as the effect of his influence.'

"Hence all those animals which are of hideous aspect, or of fierce and untamable disposition, were sacred to Typhon, and were regarded as being representations of him. Among these, the crocodile and the hippopotamus are mentioned by several writers as the most remarkable. The Typhonian animals were symbols of darkness and destruction. The hippopotamus was an emblem of the western pole, the *Ζοφος*, or dark region, which swallows up the sun and the other celestial bodies."

And this notion of physical evil extended itself among the Jews in connection with their conception of Satan, until all disease and suffering were ascribed to him. In the gospel histories we find persons spoken of as being bound by Satan, and labouring under an infirmity, through a number of successive years. The most terrific form of physical influence ascribed to Satan and his angels was that of possession, in which demons were supposed to take possession of the physical powers of a human being, to speak with his organs, to identify themselves, as it were, with him, and thus to render him the mere agent of their blasphemies and of their purposes. And this resolution of all physical evil into Satanic influence has descended, if not to our own times, yet near to them. There is a complete epitome of the work which is thus ascribed to Satan given by our great dramatic poet. The agency of witchcraft was through the power of Satan. The souls of the individuals who were supposed to practise it were made the price of a compact, in which his influence, for physical evil, over the elements was vested in them; and thus it was said of them that they could

> "untie the winds, and let them fight
> Against the churches; make the yesty waves
> Confound and swallow navigation up;
> And bladed corn be lodged, and trees blown down;
> And castles topple on their warders' heads;
> And palaces and pyramids to slope
> Their heads to their foundations; make the treasure
> Of nature's germins tumble all together,
> Even till destruction sicken."

This predominance, this power over the elements of

physical being, was the first great addition which was made to the original conception of an accusing spirit. At the time of the Babylonian captivity, another mode of speculation in theology was brought under the view of the Israelites. They became acquainted with a religion founded on the doctrine of the two Principles of good and evil, Ormuzd and Ahriman, in ceaseless conflict with one another. But the Ahriman of the Persians had a different species of empire from the Typhon of the Egyptians. The Typhonian empire was that of material or physical evil. The empire of Ahriman was the principle of moral or spiritual evil; at least, it extended to this, and in this was most triumphantly exhibited. The Persian theology ascribed all things to spiritual agency. Legions of spirits surrounded the throne of the Principle of good, and there received their benignant missions; there were the spirits of the elements—there were the genii of the months, who, as they fulfilled their course through the circling year, were to render each an occasion of beneficence to man: the Persians peopled heaven, earth, and air with spiritual beings; and as they saw in these a mighty army of good influence, they traced also an opposing host of evil influences, all directed by Ahriman, whose object was to make the darkness prevail against the light, suffering over enjoyment, and vice over goodness. The doctrine of the two Principles was altogether incompatible with the Jewish theology, which was firmly based on monotheism; but, from their familiarity with it, they were led to ascribe a spiritual as well as a physical agency to Satan, who thus became promoted to a kind of secondary divinity in their theology. His power was now over mind, he was regarded as acting upon the thoughts. Not merely could he heap calamity after calamity on the external circumstances of the individual—not merely could he rack the body with disease—but he penetrated to the very soul, and there erected the loftiest throne of his evil dominion; and it is as the tempter by means of evil thoughts, that we find him spoken of in Christ's narrative (a figurative narrative, I think there can be little reason to doubt) of his own temptation in the wilderness. The suggestions of the human mind, the natural course of an individual's thoughts, when entering upon so important a mission as that of Christ, and one which in-

volved persecution, and sacrifices, and suffering, and death itself at no great distance,—the thoughts which would naturally and, we may almost say, necessarily occur in a previous season of meditation,—are there described as the suggestions, as the language, as the spoken words of Satan. We find him, therefore, now identified with moral as well as with physical influence, extending his empire into yet higher regions, and the notion in men's minds consequently becoming that of a more exalted and spiritual being. As the Jewish notion forbade their adoption of the Persian system of the two Principles—as they necessarily considered Satan as a created being, and therefore as an inferior and subordinate being to the God of goodness—they were of course ready to speculate on the time when he was created pure, on his apostasy, on the companionship of others in his apostasy, on the struggle with which such a change in the celestial hierarchy must have been accompanied; and hence the idea which we first find suggested, and only suggested, in the book of Revelation, of war in heaven—of a conflict between the hosts of opposing angels, those that stood firm to their obedience, and those that rebelled against their Creator—a notion which wrought its way into theology, and which became the foundation of the sublime reveries of the bard of *Paradise Lost.*

But while the course of thought was thus flowing in one direction, and tending to render the notion of Satan more spiritual and lofty, there were other influences, other combinations, having a very different effect. If we find in the conception of the devil, as afterwards presented, vestiges not only of the original accusing angel of the Jews, but also of the Egyptian god Typhon, the god of physical evil,—and of the Persian Ahriman, the god of moral evil,—we find also, in that form in which the evil spirit was supposed to appear when the notion had become common among the unlearned converts to Christianity, traces of the Grecian god Pan—not Pan in the higher sense in which the Greeks sometimes used that word—not the universal Being or Spirit—not the Pan that could be taken as the emblem of their entire mythology, as in the story that, at the birth of Christ, a voice, a supernatural voice, was heard declaring that the great Pan was dead, from which time the oracles

of the heathen temples ceased,—but the god Pan, in the commonest acceptation of his nature and attributes which the Greeks gave him — their sylvan deity, sportive and licentious, and with his figure half human and half bestial —their Pan, with horns and shaggy form and cloven foot; precisely the picture that is in recent times so generally adopted to represent the devil, and which, could an ancient Greek rise from the dead and behold it, he would recognise as one of his own deities.

With this combination of the lofty and the grotesque, others also were going on, through the identification that was made, at an early period, of all the heathen deities with the demons of the Christian Church. It was the opinion of the fathers, that every deity of idolatrous nations was some particular demon, who inhabited his image and gave it supernal power, and who dictated the oracles that were ascribed to him—real prophecies, as they imagined, in some cases, of future events. Consequently, there was a constant influx of the attributes of idols of different countries to the notion of the devil, or of his host of rebellious spirits. Moloch, and Baal, and Ashtaroth or Astarte, names of the Canaanitish idols, became afterwards chiefly known as the supposed proper names of demons or devils, even without reference to the way in which they were originally used. They came, the deities of one nation after another. First, those of the Canaanites swelled the hosts of devils—Moloch, as I have said, and Baal, and Astarte, the Phœnician queen of heaven; and Dagon, half man and half fish, the worshiped of the Philistines; and after the Syrian deities had made their contribution to the constantly enlarging notion of the devil and his angels, there came the Greek mythology also, though to a Greek such an idea as that of a devil was altogether incomprehensible; for his Pluto, who reigned in hell, was a true god, and had the common attributes of deity ascribed to him, and worship paid him: but their deities, whether of heaven, earth, or sea, their Jupiter, their Neptune, their Pluto, their Mars, and all the rest of their host of gods,—these, too, were numbered by the fathers with the diabolical hosts;—and as Christianity spread from country to country, the former gods of the idolatrous natives were added to pandemonium. There was thus an aggregate of all the dark qualities that

were ascribed by the northern tribes to the beings whom they adored. The spirits of the mountain, and of the flood, and of the torrent, and of the mine,—these, whatever qualities they had, some of them grotesque as well as malignant, all became contributory to the same conception, all tended to aggrandise the notion which was overspreading religion with its darkness.

And what were the results? Persecution, malignant persecution, that, under the notion of detecting a compact with evil spirits, fixed alike upon those of the loftiest mind and those of the wretchedest circumstances. It is scarcely possible for words to express the way in which, during the middle ages, this doctrine of the devil was made to bear upon whatever was most intellectually advanced, or upon whatever was most depressed in condition. Ignorant old women were tortured until, in the insanity brought on by what they endured, they confessed to unnatural compacts with the arch-fiend, and described the power which, in their ravings, they alleged him to have given them over the productions of human industry and the concerns of human life. While the chemist, in his experiments; the mathematician, in his calculations; the inventor, in exercising the boldest resources of his mind to produce some machine which might facilitate the operations of human labour, and gain another step in the subjugation of the earth to mortal skill,—they, too, were arraigned—the Church still fearing the light which they spread abroad in the earth—and, as accomplices of the devil and his angels, were one after another harassed out of their lives, or led away to ignominious death. So great was the fanaticism which was spread abroad in our own country in connection with this subject, that we even read of one woman in Scotland who persisted in a confession of her guilt for the very purpose of insuring her execution, declaring on the scaffold that her reason for doing so was, that the very accusation had so tainted all the streams of enjoyment that belonged to her existence, that she would rather endure immediate death than support the burden of life under the prejudice, the hostility, the malignity, which had thus been created around her.

The notion itself is an altogether incongruous one, however naturally it may have grown; and whether the tracing

of its history on which I have ventured be correct or not, we cannot imagine such a combination of supernatural intelligence with a corresponding degree of vice and malignity as goes to make up the common notion of the devil. There is a point beyond which, if the mind extends, it must perceive the real interests of the individual,—and those real interests must, in the creation of a good God, be identified with goodness. A much smaller portion of intellect than is commonly assigned to the evil spirit would lead its possessor to perceive the real interests which creation has woven around him, and which render goodness the universal condition of enjoyment. But my purpose has rather been one of illustration, of historical illustration, than of doctrinal controversy. In indicating the way in which this tenet arose, and in which it was gradually augmented, we at once find evidence of its being the natural result of the coalescence of certain superstitions with one another. We see them flowing in upon the original stream, and, while they enlarged it, discolouring it also. We see no trace whatever at any point of a communication from heaven to earth of the existence of such a being. If that were an historical fact, it might be ascertained and certified; but there is not the shadow of a reason for believing it. We see a natural accumulation of speculations and superstitions heaped together, until they have produced the most fearful pile that the human mind has ever contemplated; and where that notion gets hold of the mind, as it sometimes has done with the more enthusiastic sects, what escape is there from a life of constant harassment? The idea of a being that can penetrate to the very mind, of a being of essential infinity, of one who may be present with us by day and by night, sedulously arranging our external circumstances so that they become the strongest temptations, watching over the frailty of the individual constitution, and applying to it all the powers which an indefinite command over the elements and circumstances and events can realise, in order to turn it aside to evil,—the notion of a being who can whisper blasphemies in the ear, so that they seem the thoughts of the person himself —who perhaps has such an access to the mind as to cause thoughts of evil there to spring up with every appearance of spontaneous growth—who pursues the objects of his

malignity through all the course of their lives, raging with more intense fury as he thinks repentance and reformation may snatch them from his grasp—and who watches by the pillow of the dying, that he may seize on the departing soul,—why, this is a notion that cannot but generate misery under the name of religion, that cannot but cast a deep and darkening shade over human life, that cannot but confound and pervert that religion which, in its natural tendency, should soothe and purify and elevate with joyousness the human heart. It is an influence which altogether breathes the air of the infernal pit; of which we can behold no traces in the creation and universe of God.

The notion of a devil certainly furnishes no solution of the question of the origin of evil: but it has an incidental result which may be worth noting. The very conception of a devil is a testimony—involuntary and unconscious it may be, but a testimony still—to the good of human nature. Those who hold in its fullest extent the doctrine of the devil, generally hold also the doctrine of the total corruption of human nature. What a superfluity of evil is here! Each renders the other totally unnecessary. Each in itself would be an adequate cause for all the evil of which the existence is demonstrable. But the very fact that humanity has looked out of itself for the production of evil—the very fact that there has been a tendency, under all the most diversified forms of superstition, to find some other cause than is to be found in our own minds and hearts for the seeming aberrations of nature from her even course, or for that of human conduct from the path of goodness and of happiness—this is a testimony, a strong, impressive testimony, to the original tendencies of our being—to the fact that humanity still bears the moral impress of its Maker—still comes into the world, the inheritor, not of his curse, but of his blessing.

The controversy concerning the origin of evil still goes on; and we may advance thus far towards a solution,—that the principles of creation and providence are evidently beneficent. We find beneficent design through all material and intellectual laws—we find beneficent design in the tendencies of the human race, as they are evinced when we contemplate the long history of ages. We have on every side indications of prevailing goodness, which, if they can-

not solve the whole difficulty to the mind, may at least afford a resting-place to the heart—which may call for the exercise of that confidence, of that reverential confidence, in a benignant presiding Power, which it may dignify man's nature to feel, and in which he is most blessed and expectant of blessing. In that faith he cherishes his aspirations. He believes that partial evil is, in fact, universal good—that it is good in the reasons of its existence, good in its operation and influence, though not traceable by him—and that all things are resolvable into that one pervading Spirit, of which love is the very essence. In this the mind may rest, and we may learn to contemplate all objects and events in a purer light. Man cannot, if he would, imagine unmixed malignity. The believers in the doctrine of the devil have thought to do this with their belief, and in doing so they have often erred so grossly as to make him the author of the best and greatest benefits that have been achieved. Thinking to assign only evil to him, the Manicheans ascribed to him the production of the books of the Old Testament,—of that glorious volume, so rich in history and poetry, so lofty in many of its moral precepts, so powerful in its spirit, and which was the great agency in preparing the mind for the more gentle and generous view of Christianity. They, in their fanaticism, thought they perceived in it so strong a contrast with the New Testament, that both could not be the work of the same author; and so they ascribed the Old Testament to the devil,—making him the author of good, while they thought they were only aggravating the extent of his supposed malignity. One authority on a question which for a while agitated Europe, namely, the original peopling of the New World, of the American continent, ascribed the population of America to the devil, supposing that it was a contrivance to withdraw a portion of the human race from the influence of Christianity, then spreading through the world: and again the act ascribed, although meant to be one of evil, was in reality one of the highest order of good, preparing the way for a new condition of society, opening a refuge from which the oppressed of the Old World should derive hope and strength, and where perhaps society is destined eventually to regenerate itself. To the devil also was ascribed, under the wonderment produced by the multiplication of copies of manu-

scripts, the invention of printing—an agency which, more than any other, carries terror into all the regions of darkness and of deception.

So that, in every attempt to describe mere evil, man stumbles into good—a warning against hastily concluding that any thing or event is evil—a monition of the omnipresence of good, and of its being there where least of all we may suppose its existence and its influence.

A zealous Unitarian missionary once wished there were a devil, in order that he might effect his conversion. The best conversion is that of all antagonism into love, universal love, the love of God.

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

September 30th, 1838.

The subject of this morning's lecture is the narratives given by three of the evangelists of Christ's temptation in the wilderness. The first of them, that of St. Matthew, is given at the commencement of the fourth chapter of his gospel, and runs thus:

"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

The account given of this transaction by the evangelist Mark is a very different one, and is contained altogether

in the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the first chapter of his gospel: "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."

That of Luke is at the commencement of the fourth chapter, and runs thus: "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." This, which here stands as the second temptation, appears as the third in the narrative of Matthew just read. "And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." There is here another diversity from the first account, namely, the addition of the words just read, "for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." This diversity may in part be accounted for by the circumstance that St. Matthew wrote expressly for the Jews, with whose notion of Satan the idea of inferiority to the Deity was clearly associated. St. Luke wrote rather for the proselytes; and some of these, being converts from the doctrine of the two independent Principles, which was the leading tenet of the Persian religion, might need to have pointed out to them that, whatever means were used in this supposed temptation, it was only a subordinate and delegated power that was exercised by the spirit in which was personified the principle of evil. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge

over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season."

The spirit of this passage, the moral instruction contained under this veil of allegory or of mythos, is not, I think, very difficult for comment. But the literal sense of the passage has always made it an excruciating one for commentators. On scarcely any passage of the New Testament, comprised within a similar compass, has there perhaps been so much written, or have there been so many conflicting theories and interpretations. Those who contend in all cases for the verbal interpretation of the scriptures, for their strict and literal interpretation, must encounter here many sore difficulties and obstacles; and as they are generally the adherents of that creed which represents Jesus of Nazareth as an incarnate Deity,—as combining in his person, with humanity, a divine existence coördinate with that of the Eternal Father,—the difficulties of that class of expositors are immeasurably increased. The notion of a creature tempting the Creator to sin—of a fallen spirit aiming to become the seducer of his Maker and Lord—of his thinking to bribe him by the promise either of temporal or of spiritual authority—is in itself such a glaring absurdity, as to require no small nerve in the expositor who finds that he has this to get over at the very outset of his interpretation. And then, too, with the species of dialogue which is here supposed, on their theory, to be carried on between the spirit of evil and the Author of all good—the sort of familiar converse which it represents between the two great powers of heaven and of hell—the way in which the demon is represented as taking the Saviour,—the incarnate Deity, be it ever remembered, on this hypothesis,—and conveying him, first to the pinnacle of the temple, and then to the top of a high mountain—these are a second set of difficulties, with which it requires no small tact to grapple; and then come the remaining and physical ones, of the whole world, or of any such portion as to answer the purpose here, being seen from the summit of any high mountain in the world. It is true that such expositors are not

always to be daunted by merely physical difficulties. There are many of them who would be disposed to say, in their zeal to uphold the scriptures, that if the world were round, it ought not to have been so—perhaps they would fly in the face of science, and maintain the old theory of its being merely a flat outstretched plane. We know, indeed, that there was a time when the true notion of the figure of the earth, and of the motion of the earth and the heavenly bodies, was not held. We know that Galileo suffered a long and severe imprisonment for asserting what is now recognised as the only true theory of the solar system; and there are those who yet manifest a similar spirit to that of his persecutors—whose opposition is not to geography indeed, but to geology—and who attempt to raise an outcry against any man who dares to read the inscriptions which are broadly legible on the earth's strata, because they contain lessons which do not agree with the literal construction of the terms of the Mosaic record. Other sets of expositors have not been without their difficulties; and those who, adopting in many respects a more rational system, yet seek to establish their tenets by means of the application of minute verbal criticism to the language of the scriptures, rather than by considering their spirit, and construing the letter according to the light of reason, find themselves plunged into many obscurities, and involved in much entanglement, in their exposition of the varying records of this transaction. Some of them, to get rid of the notion that the personality of the devil is asserted in any passage in the scriptures, have resolved the whole into a vision; one party ascribing the vision to evil, and another party to good, agency. But, in so doing, the very notion of a temptation is altogether obliterated. It is true that the presentation of certain inducements to a person in sleep, and the way in which he deals with them in his sleep, may afford some guidance to a judgment of his character, may throw some light even on his more latent disposition; still, we cannot take the triumph over temptation which may be achieved in slumber as any certain presage of the ability of the individual to confront such temptations in real life, and to obtain, in like manner, a victory over them.

The most rational exposition, I think, of the fact to

which these records allude, is that which resolves the temptation into the working of Christ's mind, when, for a season, he retired to the wilderness prior to his appearing before the public of Judæa, to call their attention to those reforms which he projected in their religion and in their morals, and to those views of the spiritual kingdom which he desired to inculcate among them. In a sermon on this subject which I published some time ago, in a volume entitled *Christ and Christianity*,* I endeavoured to trace the trains of thought passing through the mind of Christ, which might be described under the figures which are employed in these narratives. The following passage from that discourse may show the way in which this interpretation deals with the texts that have just been read.

"The scenes and actions of the temptation were internal, not external; they were not in the surrounding wilderness, but in his own mind: *there* were felt the want, the doubt, the desire; there were presented the inducements; there rose the suggestion; there was achieved the repulse; there struggled the adversary, till he was put to flight and shame; and there, in peaceful and blissful emotions, did angels minister to the exhausted but victorious combatant.

"If we advert to the previous circumstances of Jesus, to the opinions and condition of his countrymen, and to the work which he now became aware that 'the Father had given him to do,' it will appear that some such temptations as these must have been encountered by him at the commencement of his public life. He was born, brought up, and had passed about thirty years of his life, in a state of poverty. The tradition of Christian antiquity is highly probable, that the carpenter's son had habitually laboured with his own hands. During his forty days' seclusion in the wilderness, he fasted; that is to say, he was without any regular supply of food. What would come in his way there without exertion—for his attention would be fixed on the one all-absorbing subject on which he had retired thither to meditate—would be but scanty in quantity and poor in quality. His frame began to feel the debilitating and depressing consequences which would naturally follow.

* Reprinted in *Memorial Edition*, vol. ii. p. 47.

These would extend themselves to his intellect. Not only would the cravings of hunger attempt to lord it over his mind and will, and demand by some means or other their instant gratification, but gloomy views would arise of the privations and hardships of his future life. He would look around, but see only the stones of the desert. Some of them, it may be, to an imagination thus affected by the body, would present a resemblance to loaves of bread. The idea of their transformation would occur; and with it the full consciousness of his recent endowment with miraculous power for the accomplishment of his mission would rush strongly upon his mind. Why not make trial of that power now, by employing it to create the means of bodily support? This was the first temptation. Thus 'the tempter came to him, and said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' How many would have yielded! How many would not have reflected that the spirit was given simply and exclusively for the great objects of a public work, a divine mission! How many would not at such an instant have been impressed with the conviction that the God who called him to devote himself, soul and body, to that work, would never fail of providing the means of supporting his natural existence through it! How many would have felt, in such circumstances, their minds drawn in any direction rather than to the general principle, that it is not by inherent sufficiency, but by the divine will, that food is the means of sustaining life! But thus did his thoughts and feelings rise above the trial, and he answered and said, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;' by any means which God ordains, or without external means, if he so will. And so his mind again grew calm and clear and confiding; and if the bodily suffering continued, it was unfelt and powerless over his thoughts, and he was triumphant."

In the same manner, the other two temptations are traced to the thoughts which naturally arise out of this: the first being to precipitate his public appearance, and claim the attention of the Jews; the other, to aim at political power. I think in this account I have given substantially the truth of the facts which form the foundation of

these narratives. I see no reason to deviate to any important extent from that exposition. But there is one question which, in the sermon from which I have now quoted, is not touched upon, and that is a question of some interest in the reading of the evangelical histories; namely, if the foundation of the narratives was in such facts as these, how comes the incident to have been recorded by three of the biographers of Christ in terms so highly figurative, and yet which are substantially the same? How came they all three to have embodied the conflict of internal thought as a dialogue between Christ and an evil spirit? and it is on this difficulty that I would now offer a few observations. Were we to ascribe it to the concurrent testimony of witnesses, who thought they beheld such an evil spirit, and heard such a dialogue, there would be one solution. But it will be seen there were no witnesses. It passed altogether in the wilderness, and could only be known to the evangelists by inspiration, or directly, or through some intermediate channel, from the account of Christ himself. Any notion of inspiration in the narrative I reject, for reasons that have been pretty plainly intimated. Inspiration would have given the entire scene literally and strictly as it occurred; and there could have been no variation, however large the number of persons who might have been inspired to produce its infallible record. There would not have been the abridged account of St. Mark to contrast with the detailed accounts of St. Luke and St. Matthew. If the expressions, as used by St. Luke, were those that literally passed, there would not have been the variations from them which we find in the previous one of St. Matthew; and if the order of the temptation be rightly given in the gospel of St. Matthew, that order would have been observed, it would have been strictly the same, in the narrative of St. Luke.

These diversities I take to be altogether incompatible with any such notion of inspiration as the greater mass of expositors and theologians ascribe, not only to this passage, but to the entire of the Old and the New Testament, including alike their poetry, their history, their argument, and their aspirations. The account, then, must have come from Christ; but it does not seem to me very probable that it came directly from him to the evan-

gelists, and for this reason,—it is not like any thing we find recorded of his teachings or communications, thus to veil a simple historical fact under the strongest oriental imagery. If we suppose him to have taken his own thoughts as the suggestion and language of the devil, that would be one way of accounting for it; but I think that his discourses generally tend to show that he had not any such notion of an evil spirit ranging the earth,—that he did not, in fact, teach the doctrine of the devil,—that he taught the doctrine of a universal Providence, which is incompatible with any such notion; and certainly he had no intention, in any such communication as this, of making to his disciples any revelation of such a doctrine. The tendency of his discourses was always towards the plain, the simple, that which he who runs may read and understand. If in the parables he deviated from it, still that is a deviation resting on peculiar grounds. The parables generally pointed towards the conduct of the rulers, and the impending destruction of Jerusalem. For this purpose, it was needful to express them under imaginative forms, and to excite thought in the minds of his hearers as to what these probably meant. Moreover, in these parables, their author uniformly takes facts—what were most likely so—as the basis,—occurrences, probably, of recent interest and of notoriety amongst those whom he addressed: or if he employs any thing approaching to supernatural imagery, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it is derived from notions that were peculiarly Jewish, that belonged to the theories or the superstitions of his countrymen, but which had not that alien character of the oriental philosophy which seems to influence the imagery here adopted. It appears, therefore, unlikely that Christ himself was the immediate author of this narrative to the evangelists. The likeliest person, I think, was the apostle John, although he himself has not recorded it in his gospel; and for this reason: the mind of John was evidently more imbued than that of any of the first teachers of Christianity with oriental philosophy. In addition to his gospel, in the commencement of his epistle, and in the book of Revelation,—if that be rightly ascribed to him,—he shows a familiarity with the doctrine of the two Principles, and a disposition to apply it under a modified form to Christianity. There

is an expression in the gospel of St. Luke, at the end of the temptation, that "the devil departed for a season." Paley has noticed as a coincidence that to this there is an allusion in the language ascribed to Christ by the evangelist John, when he makes our Lord say, just before the agony in the garden and the crucifixion, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." No subsequent return of the demon to tempt Christ is intimated in any other place than this. Now, this again brings us to the apostle John, whose custom it seems to have been to look on the world as the theatre of the great struggle between light and darkness, physical principles typifying the spiritual ones of good and evil; who, in the introduction to his gospel, has employed similar figures in order to depict the spirit of the religion of which he was the teacher; who would very naturally commingle his own notion of the conflict of two such principles as those of the Persian theology with the meditation of Christ's mind on his first entrance to his office; who would regard this warfare as waged intensely at that time; and who, as the beloved disciple of Christ, was most likely to have received from his own mouth the account of the anxieties, temptations, and struggles that beset him at the commencement of his career. Whether ascribed to him or not, the passage is one that—freed from the imagery which, by a change of theory in the world's philosophy, now presents so many incongruous and even offensive qualities—contains much which has germinated in men's minds, and which will continue to bear the fruit of useful reflection.

It would be interesting could we trace the history of this narrative on many of the gifted minds in different countries and ages—if we could see how it had stimulated their thoughts, how it had acted upon their own plans or their course of life, how it had become connected with their exertions, with the disposition to brave perils for the cause of truth, of good, and of humanity, and with a patience to endure them. But if we cannot trace these to any very large extent, we have on record the reflection of the evangelical imagery in the mind of the great epic poet of our own country. Milton's *Paradise Regained* is merely a poetical expansion of this narrative, coupled with such reflections as it caused to germinate in his capacious intellect. This poem

has never been so popular as *Paradise Lost*, and I think it has been most improperly underrated. It has not, indeed, that charm of external description which characterises the longer poem, and which to so many constitutes the chief source of its power. We have none of that tremendous aggregate of horrors accumulated in the description of hell, and the tossing of the fiery lake—none of the excitement which belongs to his battle of the angels, that struggle of supernatural beings for the empire of the universe; but *Paradise Regained* is a poem remarkably abundant in moral truth and wisdom, in lessons well worthy to be grafted on a description of the internal trials of the Saviour of the world, and well worthy to be suggested by the narrative, whether construed literally or figuratively, as forming its appropriate foliage and fruit, as illustrating how thought may grow in the soil of the mind, and how grand and beautiful it may there become.

It is my purpose to select a few of the passages which show how his mind derived wisdom from the narrative that has been commented upon; and the first that I would take is the description of his own youthful thoughts and tendencies which he puts into the mouth of Christ. He makes him thus recall the course of his earlier days:

> "When I was yet a child, no childish play
> To me was pleasing: all my mind was set
> Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
> What might be public good; myself I thought
> Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
> All righteous things: therefore, above my years,
> The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
> Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
> To such perfection, that ere yet my age
> Had measured twice six years, at our great feast
> I went into the temple, there to hear
> The teachers of our law, and to propose
> What might improve my knowledge or their own;
> And was admired by all."

I could have wished, perhaps—although the exceptions one has to take, on moral principle, to any thing of Milton's writing, are remarkably few—yet I could have wished the last expression had not been inserted, unless indeed the admiration be intended not in the sense of the complacency, of the applause, which his youth received, but rather admir-

ation used in the sense of wonder, of astonishment, at the light of truth thus beaming through the simplicity of childhood:

> "Yet this not all
> To which my spirit aspired: victorious deeds
> Flamed in my heart, heroic acts, one while
> To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
> Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
> Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
> Till truth were freed, and equity restored;
> Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first,
> By winning words, to conquer willing hearts,
> And make Persuasion do the work of Fear."

The obscurity, gradually more defined, of these supposed anticipations in the youthful mind of Christ—the longing and aspiring after something of wide and permanent utility—the inward consciousness of intellectual and moral greatness and power gradually marking him out for conspicuous service to mankind, and for the establishment of a new era in the world—is finely indicated. It is thus that superior spirits have often felt in early life the consciousness of some peculiar mission—it is thus that they have, in thought, rushed onwards to anticipate the scenes of their future years—it is thus that they have groped after that which should be their peculiar work upon the earth: for we must observe that the aspirations ascribed by Milton to the youthful Christ are not definite in form; they might have been those of a conqueror as well as those of a moralist—they might have been those of a destroyer as well as those of a saviour—they might have been those of one whose mission was to create a great temporal power, as well as those of one whose kingdom was to be an everlasting and spiritual dominion. They are merely the first blind gropings of the mind towards its destiny; and something like this, perhaps, passed alike in the minds of Washington or of Napoleon, of Luther or of Mahomet.

The next passage which I select is the description of true as compared with false glory, when the tempter seeks to excite his desires towards fame.

> "They err who count it glorious to subdue
> By conquest far and wide, to overrun
> Large countries, and in field great battles win,
> Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,

But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighb'ring or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy;
Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
Worshiped with temple, priest, and sacrifice!
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
Till conq'ror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deformed,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attained,
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance: I mention still
Him whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
Made famous in a land and times obscure;
Who names not now with honour patient Job?
Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?),
By what he taught, and suffered for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now,
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors."

Had poets and historians always written thus of glory, how very different would have been the world's history! how different would have been the inspiration flowing in upon the minds of ardent spirits, and colouring the whole course of their lives, and, while it coloured their lives, deeply staining the earth with human blood of which they occasioned the shedding. Truly, the teachers of mankind have been sorely their misleaders in this affair of glory: they have invested it with attributes that ought rather to have been held up to shame, if not to detestation. They have raised fallacious greatness into an opposition to true goodness, and thus have embodied some of the strongest propensities of human nature in a course of collision and warfare with the dearest interests of human nature. Happily, the time is beginning to change. Names rise upon us through the long course of past ages with a brighter and brightening lustre; and the moral estimate of the worth of actions which have raised men to celebrity begins, in some degree, to supersede that which has been founded merely upon the notoriety they obtained. The mischief which has been done by much poetical and historical literature on this

matter should excite the carefulness of those who are anxious about extending education and the enlightenment of the public mind. It is not because sentiments have been enshrined, whether in history or in poetry, that they are therefore such as that we can wish them extension of influence over the minds of the multitudes. False theories of glory are, of all others, those which should be subjected to severe analysis, and those which we should feel as repulsive matter in the productions in which they occupy so large a portion. And not only historians and poets, but divines, might learn something from this estimate of glory, from this interpretation of Christ's notion of it, as expounded by Milton: for the glory of God has been held forth—held forth with all the pomp and influence of religious doctrine—in a form which scarcely deserves more complacency than the glory here denounced as that of conquerors and of tyrants. The Deity has been represented as achieving for himself a similar species of renown, as enthroning his own greatness upon the destruction of his creatures, as illustrating the brightness of his own crown by the flames of an everlasting hell, as great in the infliction of torment and in the perpetuation of sin and of suffering. If we denounce unsparingly the glory which has made men mere conquerors, which has encouraged them to lead armies in all their devastating array over rich and fruitful fields where the cultivators dwelt in peace, what shall we say of a theology that sends forth, according to its own theory, the power and providence of God to lay waste the heart of man, to consign it to total depravity here, and to subject it to inflictions without remedy in the world to come? True glory is the same, be it of man or of the Deity; it is in both the lustre and brightness that will gather round the attribute of love and the exercise of beneficence.

The next extract I shall read is one which is introduced in a very incidental manner, and which relates, as a general reflection, to the way in which the mind should be cultivated, and to the evil of an indiscriminate and inordinate thirst of reading:

> "However, many books,
> Wise men have said, are wearisome: who reads
> Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
> A spirit and judgment equal or superior
> (And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek?),

Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep-versed in books, and shallow in himself
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.
Or if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
Solace ?"

The poet has put this into the mouth of Christ, in reply to an eloquent eulogy on the literature of Greece which he has assigned to the tempting spirit. As a general reflection, it is certainly not less applicable in our times than when it was written; nor need we have any hesitation in adopting as appropriate to our own language that which here, of course, is meant to refer to Hebrew compositions, and in saying that there is in our native tongue whatever can most delight, instruct, or elevate the mind—enriched as it was by the writer himself of this passage, and rich as it is in all that can constitute the soundest mental nourishment. Much reading has ever been mistaken for learning, and learning for wisdom. It is only by reflection—it is only by strict and close individual thought—it is only by combination with that wisdom which must be raised from the depths of man's own heart and nature—that books, or any of the means and appliances of literature, can be rendered truly serviceable. The disposition in all ages like our own — when there is a great multiplication of literature—is to overwhelm reflection in the mere reception of external communications. Thus words are substituted for thoughts, the repetition of phrases for the adoption of opinions, until, not merely in religion, but in politics, in morals, in science even, we find every where what deserves little better appellation than that of cant, instead of the intelligent expression of self-formed opinions.

The last passage I shall quote has more of imaginative description in it than those which I have just read; but I have a reason for referring to it, which will appear at the conclusion. It is the account of the night of tremendous storm in the wilderness, with which the tempter is supposed to have avenged himself on the firmness with which Christ had resisted all his allurements:

"Our Saviour, meek, and with untroubled mind,
After his airy jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms, thick intertwined, might shield
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head:
But sheltered, slept in vain; for at his head
The tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturbed his sleep: and either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven, the clouds,
From many a horrid rift abortive, poured
Fierce rain, with lightning, mixed water with fire,
In ruin reconciled: nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or tore up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken: nor yet stayed the terror there;
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environed thee; some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
Some beat at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappall'd, in calm and sinless peace.
Thus passed the night so foul, till morning fair
Came forth, with pilgrim steps, in amice gray,
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the fiend had raised,
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire."

The beautiful contrast of moral quietude with the external and natural uproar in this scene, is one of the many passages which evince the genius of the writer, and it is one which contains a beautiful moral of truth, perhaps beyond what even the writer meant in the description; for it not only impresses us with the superiority of inward consciousness to all the external storm and conflict and threatening, but we find the terrors of the night, though ascribed to demoniacal agency, passing away as the effect of a natural occurrence. They do not vanish by any counter miracle wrought on the part of the Saviour; there is no heavenly interposition to stop them: the night is spent amid all the horrors raised by the fiend, and then

"morning fair
Came forth, with pilgrim steps, in amice gray,
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar."

The morning of natural science, the dawning of human reason, thus puts to flight the infernal terrors of the night of superstition. Men's minds may be harassed by notions which for a time prevail under the name of religion,—they may be distressed by supposed demoniacal agency and influence,—they may see evil spirits walking the earth, full of terror, for their destruction; but there does not need to dispel these the interposition of miracle, the production of a new revelation from heaven, a divine or spiritual interference. Our common progress of being, the ordinary course with which the morning comes and spreads light over the varied scenes of the earth, put them to flight; and science in her ministerings treads over the ruins of superstition, and leads the mind onward to that state of thought and feeling which constitutes true religion.

The mental conflict which has been thus disentangled from its figurative colouring is one in which many minds must ever participate. It is in solitude, it is in retirement, that those who have been destined to achieve great things for mankind have ever, like Christ, laid down the principles on which they were to proceed in the devotion of their lives, and sketched the outline of their career. Nor is there wanting occasion for all, in any condition whatever, frequently to commune with themselves, and to seek that solitude which, if it be sometimes the occasion of mental conflict, is certain eventually to be the forerunner of mental calm; and which, while it gives steadiness to any course of action, gives also greatness and strength to any course of trial and of suffering. Those who thus fortify their minds, who do not live ever in the world's garish eye, and involved in its ceaseless whirl, are forming their own characters in the best mode, for the truest wisdom both of earth and of heaven. Good men, who have thus strengthened themselves in solitude, have done good to the world of a kind far superior to any that has been achieved by the mere expedients of statesmen, or by the occasional resources of partisans. The good which they have realised has been moral and enduring. It has rooted itself in men's minds, and borne its fruit in their lives. Those who, like Christ, retire to the mountain for a night of solitude and of reflection, come forth like him, though the winds be up, and the waves be roaring, and the disciples be disquieted,—they

come forth like him to walk on the waters and to still the storm. In the commonest course of human experience, by the intermingling of solitary reflection with social enjoyments and active exertions, character is built up and confirmed,—character, in all its inward harmony, its external usefulness, and its everlasting promise of repose.

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

December 16th, 1838.

The well-known lines at the commencement of Pope's *Essay on Man*—a poem with which there is much more verbal familiarity, perhaps, than real comprehension of its philosophical purport—the lines at the commencement of that poem, I say, are no bad description, with but a very few alterations, of what will be the province of the preacher, when the services of the Sunday are turned from the comparatively unprofitable ends of cracking theological nuts and repeating trite precepts, to the practical application of the great principles of religion and morality to the every-day concerns of life, individual and social. It may not even then be the duty of the preacher to leave, as the poet exhorts,

> "all meaner things
> To low ambition and the pride of kings;"

for, at least, they should not be left, in the sense of avoiding to exercise over them a righteous censorship, and bring them to that test by which all human actions ought to be tried. And we can scarcely agree to the position, that

> "life can little more supply,
> Than just to look about us and to die;"

for such were, indeed, an idle and a trifling kind of life. It affords space for much more than this; whatever its brevity, or the narrowness of its circumscription within these mortal boundaries, yet still it does afford the opportunity for doing that, the influence of which will be felt throughout eternity; it does invite us to lay the foundation of that building of character which is to be immortal in the heavens. Nor may we altogether take it as a duty to

> "vindicate the ways of God to man."

Knowledge, inquiry, a continuous seeking into the ways of God, become us better than coming forward to challenge objections, and pledge ourselves to their refutation. Let us learn to understand, to comprehend, before we aspire to vindicate; endeavouring, by all means, to gain more and more acquaintance with His workings in the heavens and on the earth, than is possessed by those who undertake to champion the cause of Providence, as if they were in possession of its secrets, and were privileged to combat in its behalf against all objectors. But it is the work peculiarly of the preacher to do that which the poet recommends in his philosophical verse,—to

"Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man,"—

secure of finding out

"A mighty maze! yet not without a plan;"

and to develop what we can of that plan, is to teach what is of more substantial worth than all the dogmas that were ever put forth in theological creeds. It should be his work to

"eye Nature's walks;"

nay, even to

"shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise:"

for, in these, how much is embodied of the morality that gives to life its peace and its enjoyments, or that fills it with disturbance, with contention, and with suffering! How much there is in these to minister to our daily improvement, to imbue our own spirits with the spirit of nature that we contemplate, and to make us firm against those corruptions and vices which, coming under the less offensive designation of "manners," may claim acceptance from those who unwarily forget that such words as virtue and vice apply to what they are doing, and may lead them far astray from the paths of simplicity and integrity! In endeavouring to realise some of these conceptions, you have recently been directed to

"eye Nature's walks;"

to regard the vicissitudes of her seasons; to trace the moral lessons which, in their beautiful succession, they bring to

the human soul, when it contemplates their variety. And those who are disposed to

"shoot folly as it flies,"

can scarcely miss hitting the decision that has recently been pronounced in an ecclesiastical court, on the lawfulness of praying for the dead. It is on this procedure, and its result, that I would now make a few observations.

It has, as you know, in the course of the last week, been declared by the judicial decree of a spiritual court, that in this country it is lawful to pray for the souls of the departed. This termination of the proceedings in the case of Mrs. Woolfrey has, I believe, excited some surprise, and, in some quarters, considerable alarm. There are those who speak of it as the greatest blow that has been given to the Church Establishment since the days of Archbishop Laud; who see in it a fearful innovation on the faith of that Church; who are terrified lest sinners should be encouraged to suppose that their eternal doom is not decided at the instant of death; whose apprehensions are strong lest something analogous to the proceedings of the Roman-Catholic Church, in reference to the doctrine of purgatory, and the practices of indulgences, confession, absolution, and masses, should find its way into what is prized as the more pure Protestant Church of England. On the other hand, there are those who rejoice very much in the decision, as delivering the Church from a very difficult position; as saving it from the remarkable inconsistency of condemning, in private individuals, the practice which is connected with so many of its own endowments,—calling that an offence against good morals in the humble tombstone, which is blazoned over the portals of halls and colleges; and rescuing it from the unmitigated odium of a persecuting spirit in relation to a proceeding that has, to a large extent, been deemed natural and innocent. But while the result acts in these different ways upon different classes of persons connected with the Church, those of us who are only lookers-on in such matters may find it suggestive of reflections of a different description,—may see some things in it to excite our pity, some to encourage our expectation and our hope that he common sense of mankind will at last be led to see and to shake off the absurdities that have been palmed upon the

world under the name of Christianity, to the confusion and degradation of all true religion.

This recent transaction is, properly, a decree of doctrine; it is a professedly religious truth affirmed by a judicial tribunal. On the eleventh of this month, any man might have been defied to say that praying for the dead was lawful; on the thirteenth of this month, any man might have been as safely defied to say that praying for the dead was not lawful. A principle in theology—a principle relating to the exercise of prayer, and to our communication with the Deity, who is the object of prayer—and relating to our connection with the dead, who are removed from the visible sphere of existence,—this principle was decreed, on the twelfth of December, in the Court of Arches. A new doctrine rose upon the world; or only, perhaps, an old doctrine, which had been rendered obsolete for ages, came back, like a reappearing star, or like a comet that had fulfilled its course, and, after wandering long amid the regions of night and darkness, burst from its concealment, beamed again on our horizon, and went on rejoicing in the light of day to which it had been again admitted. Science has long been cautioned from the task of making doctrines,—has been warned off all holy ground. We have been told that all the science in the world cannot add to the amount of religious truth, cannot produce one new doctrine. The Bible is collected together, its books are arranged and bound up firm and fast: no new truth is to come from thence. Councils have ceased to meet and to issue their decrees, to denounce those heresies or to confirm these truths. Such times have passed away, they have gone into oblivion. The period has elapsed when monarchs on the English throne sent forth their proclamations of doctrine; when they made that truth and duty on one day which was not truth and duty on another day. The Houses of Parliament no longer make enactments of uniformity in matters of religious belief. No saint arises on the earth, speaking the language of inspiration; no angel descends from heaven to tell us some new doctrine: these voices are all dumb and silent. It was supposed the age had passed away when any such novelty could be announced, when any future revelation was to be expected; and yet, all at once, a doctrine beams upon us in the decision of the Court of Arches.

We read curious accounts by travellers of the making of saints and of gods. We are told how, in India, they hew their rough statues; and with what solemnity the priests endow them with a divine vitality, which enables them, it is supposed, to hear the prayers of their worshipers, and exert their power for their fulfilment. We have, in the prophecy of Isaiah, a magnificently ironical description of the mode in which idolaters proceeded in those days in Judæa: how they chose a tree that would not rot—how part of it was used for common culinary purposes, thrown into the fire, until the proprietor could sit by and rejoice, and say, "I am warm, I have seen the fire;" and then, with the remainder, he made a god, hewing it into some rough outline of something in heaven above, or in the world beneath, and fell down and worshiped it. But not one of all these heresies, in making saints and gods, was like that of the clergyman of a parish preferring a charge against a parishioner, of which the bishop took the first cognisance, and which was then remitted to a higher authority; where the case was argued by lawyers on both sides, and at last decided by the judge, with all due forms; where we have bishops and clergymen, and the judicial authority, from the bench to the crier of the court, all coöperating together, showing us the novel spectacle of the making of a new doctrine. And yet the world seems to go on much the same; notwithstanding this bringing to light, in this extraordinary manner, of a new divine truth, merchants assemble at 'Change, traders repair to the mart, ships arrive and sail, the mails go on with their accustomed regularity, the stars rise and set, churches stand, and tithes are collected,—and every thing seems just the same as it was before this discovery. There is no interruption of men's ordinary pursuits—there is no strange indication, there are no glaring phenomena, above, below, or around, to impress us with the pretension, with the extraordinary pretension, that a truth of religion was last week ascertained and decided.

The decision is of that kind which is called judge-made law, and it is judge-made law in matters of religious faith. Bentham was the first who thoroughly exposed the fact, that a great portion of the law of the land is not made by the legislature, by that body which is looked to as the legislature—that, whatever may be said of the common

law or of statute law, the greater portion of the actual law under which society exists, and by which its concerns of property, and it may be of liberty and of life, are regulated, is really made by the judge in the form of interpretation. And something of this kind always happens where there is a body of authorised interpreters: it happens continually in theology, and has so done from the time when it was sought to embody theology in dogmatical propositions. Preachers have always been the makers of the religion which they profess to expound. A text, whether it be a legal text or a religious one, is always pliable in strong hands; it takes the form impressed upon it: and those who are looked to as interpreters that ought to be reverenced, will be sure to place themselves on the seat of Moses, or of the modern judge.

And so in this case. Who decides that it is lawful to pray for the souls of the departed? No formal investigation, by those the most learned in such matters, into the differences of opinion there may be amongst mankind, has been carried on; there has been no debate or discussion, —nothing but the ordinary proceedings of a tribunal. A royal council has not been held on the subject, nor have the ministers of state been summoned to explain their sentiments on the impropriety of praying for the dead. The Houses of Lords and of Commons have not met upon this great subject; it has not been embodied in the form of a parliamentary motion; the treasury and the opposition benches have not been brought into collision upon it; nor has even the bench of bishops made its own peculiar examination into the point. There has been no application of the common modes of giving the highest degree of authority to the decision; but the whole thing is dismissed accidentally; it comes as an accident into the case of Brecks *v.* Woolfrey; and so by this chance-work, by a sort of by-blow, is this great theological truth professedly decided. It is as if a sculptor should throw his mallet at a rock and strike out a statue. And the circumstance of such a thing being decided in this incidental and almost accidental manner throws a strange light upon the constitution of the Church of England, and upon the mode in which the people of England allow such questions to be treated. How long will this trifling be borne? how long will the province of intellect be thus

given up to the chicanery of lawyers and the proceedings of ecclesiastical courts? how long must it be before it is felt that these are matters to leave to those who think and feel, to leave to them between their souls and their God, and not to be touched by the clumsy machinery that may be allowed to do its own proper work in the distribution or adjudication of property?

And what a circumstance it is, that the Church of England must really have been unacquainted with its own faith! It did not know what it believed. The vicar of Carisbrooke did not know, or certainly he would not have instituted proceedings against a supposed offending individual, on account of her soul's health, and to ward off the scandal that was felt in the minds of his Protestant parishioners. The parishioners of Carisbrooke assuredly did not know, or they would not have been, as he says they were, scandalised in passing this tomb, as they went along the churchyard, and read its admonition to "pray for the soul" of the departed, and the text from Maccabees, "It is a good and wholesome thing to pray for the dead." Instead of being scandalised, it appears that they ought to have rejoiced; instead of being annoyed at the heresy, it seems now that they ought to have been gratified by the orthodoxy. They were in a state which implied extraordinary ignorance; they were all in the dark together, until the decree of a court comes to tell them how they are to feel in relation to the Deity, to their fellow-creatures, and to those who are departed. We find a confusion and ignorance over the whole body of the clergy and the laity; we find them all, as it were, groping in the dark, and not knowing what it was they were supposed to believe; while at that very time it was the law that they should have been in a certain state of belief and of feeling. Of what use, then, are the Thirty-nine Articles? of what use are the three Creeds? of what use is the voluminous Prayer-book? of what use are all the more voluminous Canons and Homilies, and all the Acts of Parliament, and all the writings of all the Anglican fathers,—if they have left the members of that Church, which they were designed to enlighten, in a state of uncertainty and of error like this? Why, what can avail Acts of Uniformity, or attempts to keep men in the truth, or to put them into the truth, by means of any creeds or dogmas whatsoever?

The fact is, that there is scarcely any thing that is now so certain in the Church of England as this very recent decision. The new truth shines more drightly and distinctly than all the old truths of the orthodox firmament: for it cannot be said with absolute certainty that the Articles of the Church of England are Calvinistic,—there is a large body of the reformed clergy who maintain that they are Arminian; it cannot be said that the Articles of the Church of England are all to be received and subscribed as articles of faith,—for there is a very large and highly respectable body of clergymen who maintain that they are only articles of peace, and not of truth. In fact, there is scarcely any thing of which we can say with certainty, This is the faith of the Church of England, unless it be the single point, that it is lawful to pray for the dead.

But we cannot allow either the decision or the proceedings to pass off in this way. Such things are not to be lightly dealt with, for there is in them the venom of persecution. There was that spirit in the institution of this proceeding. Whatever had been the law, either temporal or ecclesiastical, one cannot imagine that any one under the influence of a Christian spirit could avail himself of either one law or the other in order to harass an individual for such an expression of natural emotion. But when the law interferes with religion, it is sure to interfere in the form of persecution; and what can be more virulent than some of the legal enactments which were cited in connection with this very proceeding? The learned judge—and no doubt with great propriety—went back to the time of Edward VI., and argued the question as to the alterations which were then made in the Book of Common Prayer; and, in the course of that argument, he contends that the prayers for the dead which had been in the former liturgy were not omitted from any objection to them in themselves, but merely out of toleration for the consciences of some of the Puritans by whom that objection was felt. He said he had looked into the act by which the second Prayer-book was established, the 5th and 6th of Edward VI., which was entitled, "An Act for the Uniformity of Service, and the Administration of Sacraments throughout the Realm." I read this in order to show the spirit in which legislation interferes:

"*An Acte for the Uniformitie of Common Praier, and administration of the Sacramentes.*

"Where there hath bene a very Godly order sette furthe, by Authoritie of Parlament, for Common Praier, and administration of the Sacramentes, to be used in the mother Tong, within this Church of Englande, agreable to the Worde of God, and the Primative Churche, very comfortable to all good people desiryng to lyve in Christian conversation, and most profitable to the estate of this realme, upon the whiche, the mercy, favour and blessing of almighty God, is in no wise so redily, and plentuously powred, as by commune praiers, due usyng of the Sacramentes, and often preachyng of the Gospell, with the devocion of the hearers, and yet this notwithstandyng, a greate number of people in divers partes of this Realme, folowyng their owne sensualitie, and livyng either without knowlege, or due feare of God, do wilfully and damnably before almighty God absteine and refuse to come to their Paroche Churches, and other places where commune Praier, administration of the Sacramentes and preachyng of the worde of God is used upon the Sondaies and other daies ordeined to be holy daies.

"For reformation herof, be it enacted by the Kyng our Sovereigne lorde, with the assent of the lordes, and communes, in this present parlament assembled, and by the aucthoritie of the same, that from and after the feast of al Sainctes nexte commyng, al, and euery persone and persones, enhabityng within this realme, or any other the kynges majesties dominions, shall diligently, and faithfully (havyng no lawfull or resonable excuse to be absent) endevour themselves to resort to their paroche churche, or chappell accustomed, or upon reasonable let thereof, to some usual place where commune praiour, and suche service of God shal be used in such tyme of let, upon every Sondaie, and other daies ordeined, and used to be kepte as holy daies, and then, and there to abyde orderly and soberly, duryng the tyme of the commune praiour, preachynges, or other service of God, there to be used and ministred, uppon paine of punishment by the Censures of the churche.

"And for the due execution hereof, the Kynges most excellent Majestie, the lordes temporale, and all the com-

mons in this present parlament assembled, doth in Gods name earnestly require, and charge all the Archebishoppes, Bishoppes, and other Ordenaries, that thei shall endeavour themselfes, to the uttermost of their knowleges, that the due and true execucion hereof maie be had, throughout their diocesses and charges, as thei will answere before God, for suche evilles and plagues, wherwith almightie God, maie justly punishe his people, for neglectyng this good and wholesome lawe.

"And for their auethoritie in this behalfe, be it further likewise enacted, by thauethoritie aforesaied, that all, and singular, the same Archebishoppes, Bishoppes, and all other their officers exercisyng Ecclesiasticall jurisdiccion, as well in place exempt, as not exempt, within their diocesses, shall have ful power and auethoritie by this acte, to reforme, correct, and punishe by Censures of the churche, all and synguler persones, whiche shall offende within any their jurisdiccions, or diocesses, after the said feast of al Sainctes next commyng, against this acte and statute, any other lawe, statute, previlege, libertie, or provision, heretofore made, had, or suffered to the contrary, notwithstandyng.

"And because there hath risen in the use and exercise of the foresaied common service in the churche, heretofore set furthe, diverse doubtes for the fashion and maner of the ministracion of the same, rather by the curiositie of the minister and mistakers, then of any other worthy cause, therfore as well for the more plain and manifest explanacion hereof, as for the more perfeccion of the said order of common service, in some places where it is necessary to make the same praier and fashion of service more earnest and fitte, to stirre christian people to the true honouryng of almightie God; the Kynges most excellent Majestie, with the assent of the lordes and commons, in this present parlament assembled, and by the auethoritie of the same, hath caused the aforesaied order of common service, entituled the Boke of common praier, to be faithfully and godly perused, explaned, and made fully perfect, and by the aforesaied auethoritie, hath annexed and joyned it, so explaned and perfected, to this present statute, addyng also a fourme and maner of makyng, and consecratyng of Archbishoppes, Bishoppes, priestes and deacons, to be of like force, auethoritie and value, as the same like aforesaied boke entituled the

Boke of common praier was before, and to be accepted, received, used and estemed, in like sorte and maner, and with the same clauses of provisions and excepcions to all ententes, construccions and purposes, as by the acte of parlament, made in the second yere of the Kynges Majesties reigne, was ordeined, limited, expressed, and appoyncted, for the uniformitie of service, and administracion of the Sacramentes, throughout the realme, upon the severall paines, as in the saied acte of parlament is expressed. And the saied former acte, to stand in full force and strength, to al ententes, and construccions, and to be applied, practised, and put in uze, to, and for the establishynge of the boke of common praier, now explaned, and hereunto annexed, and also the said forme of makyng of Archebishoppes, Bishoppes, priestes, and deacons, hereunto annexed, as it was for the former boke.

"And by the aucthoritie aforesaied it is now further enacted, that if any maner of persone, or persones, enhabityng and beyng, within this realme, or any other the kynges majesties dominions, shall after the sai d feast of all Sainctes, willyngly and wittyngly, heare, and be present at any other maner, or forme, of common praier, or administracion of the Sacramentes, of makyng of ministers in the churches, or of any other rites, conteined in the booke annexed to this acte, then is mencioned, and set furthe in the saied boke, or that is contrary to the forme of sondery provisions, and excepcions, conteined in the aforesaied former statute, and shal be thereof convicted, accordyng to the lawes of this realme, before the Justices of Assise, Justices of Oyer and Determiner, Justices of Peace in their Sessions, or any of them, by the verdicte of twelve men, or by his, or their owne côfession or otherwise, shall for the firste offence suffer emprisonment, for sixe monethes, without baile, or mainprize, and for the second offence, beyng likewise convicted, as is above saied, emprisonment for one whole yere, and for the third offence, in like maner emprisonment, during his or their lives.

"And for the more knowlege to be geven hereof, and better observacion of this lawe, be it enacted by thaucthoritie aforesaied, that all, and singular curates, shal upon one Sondaie every quarter of the yere, duryng one whole yere, next folowyng the aforesaied feast of all Sainctes next

commyng, rede this present Acte in the churche, at the tyme of the most assembly, and likewise ones in every yere folowyng, at the same tyme declaryng unto the people, by the auethoritie of the Scripture, how the mercy and goodnes of God, hath in all ages bene shewed to his people, in their necessities and extremities, by meanes of hartie and faithfull praiers, made to almightie God, especially where people be gathered together with one faith and mynde, to offer up their hartes by praier, as the best sacrifices that christian men can yeld."

And the spirit of this law, though baffled in the case to which I have alluded, is yet in operation in another case. There is at this moment a churchwarden in Carmarthen Gaol for not attending his parish church during his year of office, although it is stated that he was called the people's churchwarden, in contradistinction to the vicar's churchwarden, in order that the Dissenters might have their share of representation in parish matters. There he is for "wilfully and damnably," as the act has it, refusing to go to his parish church: and there is the brand of persecution, deep and broad, upon the forehead of the Church of England; for what is all this but an inquisition—a genuine, a proper inquisition—an inquiry into the people's mode of belief, or into their practices of worship; treating of others' modes and practices as if they were crimes, visiting upon them at least pecuniary punishment, and in this instance the deprivation of personal liberty; and thus exercising a vindictiveness that disgraces the name of any religion whatsoever, that shows a strong spirit of persecution at work, and that demands to be checked by the stern efforts of those who regard their civil or religious liberty.

This case was decided by the learned judge on the ground that prayer for the dead did not necessarily imply the doctrine of purgatory. If it did, he contended that it was to be condemned, because the Church has expressly condemned the doctrine of purgatory; but if it did not imply that doctrine, it was tolerable, and should be exempt from punishment. On this the whole argument of the judgment, a very long and elaborate one, turned; the judge deciding that prayer for the dead did not imply the doctrine of purgatory. The celebrated Dr. Geddes, perhaps among the most learned men the Church of Rome has ever

produced, and a man by no means disposed to be offensive towards the Church of England, was, however, of a different opinion from the learned judge in this matter; and in a very curious and interesting work called *A modest Apology for the Roman Catholics of Great Britain*, written about fifty years ago, which, after being kept for some time in manuscript, was published in the year 1800, he speaks thus of the connection of the two notions. He says of the doctrine of purgatory:

"Another Roman-Catholic tenet, which smells ill in the noses of Protestants, and is ranked by the framers of the English Articles among 'fond things;' and very justly, in my opinion, if the word *fond* be taken in its genuine original acceptation; for would it not be a *desirable* thing, that there did exist a purgatory, to purge away the imperfections which the best of us, I fear, carry to the grave, and which, although they may not merit the pains of hell, may yet be obstacles to immediate admission for the joys of heaven? Whether this *fond fancy* be 'grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to God's word,' is a question that has been plausibly debated; and which I leave to be still debated by those who choose it. I will only say, that the belief of a purgatory is a very harmless belief, was a pretty early belief in the Christian Churches, and is not incompatible with any other article of Catholic credence.

"On the belief of a purgatory is founded the practice of *praying for the dead*, another of our tenets which is reprobated by Protestants; and which, indeed, must stand or fall with purgatory."*

And yet this statement, so directly in opposition to that made by the judge, was not made for the purpose of showing how great the difference is between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. It was made for a very opposite purpose; the full drift of this book being to show how nearly the two Churches approximate, in order to found more charitable feelings—if not, indeed, an external union—upon the circumstance of that agreement. He puts every thing, therefore, which shows the unity of the two Churches in this way, in the strongest manner:

"With the Church of England we are perfectly agreed

* Geddes, pp. 181, 182, *et seq.*

in the doctrines of the Trinity; of the incarnation of the Word; of the sufferings, death, and mediatorship of Jesus Christ; and of the personality and efficacy of the Holy Ghost. In a word, we, with the Church of England, receive, and publicly recite, the *three* creeds, in the same form and equivalent terms.

"With the Church of England, we also believe that 'the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same;' that this 'Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith; yet so, that it is not lawful for her to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word;' and that 'every national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish rites or ceremonies ordained only by man's authority; so that all things be done to edification.'

"With the Church of England, we admit a spiritual hierarchy, consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons; and we believe that it 'is not lawful for any man to assume those offices before he be lawfully called and sent; and who is not chosen and called by men who have public authority to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard;' and that 'although the evil have, sometimes, chief authority in the ministrations of the Word and sacraments, yet, forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, we may use their ministry both in hearing the Word of God and receiving the sacraments.'

"With the same Church of England, we hold that 'the sacraments ordained by Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's professions, but rather sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace;' that 'baptism is, accordingly, not only a sure sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are discerned from others that are not christened, but is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, and adopted to be children of God;' and that 'the supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that,

to such as rightly and worthily receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ —which body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper.'

"With the Church of England, we acknowledge the utility and expediency of set forms of prayer, or a public liturgy; and, moreover, we allow that, as 'there was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which, in continuance of time, hath not been liable to be corrupted, it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such change and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.'

"With the Church of England, we are, in the very form of our liturgy, so much agreed,—or, to speak more properly, the liturgy of the Church of England is so nearly a copy of ours,—that, with very little variation, the one might be substituted for the other. When I run over *Tables and Rules for the movable and immovable Feasts, &c.*, and find in them the same commencement and economy of the ecclesiastical year—the same, or rather a much better, distribution of the Psalms and other books of scripture—the same or a similar *Kalendar of Feasts and Fasts*—the same terms of *Advent, Lent, Septuagesima, Easter, Whit-Sunday, &c.*—the same *Collects, Epistles,* and *Gospels*—and nearly the same mode of administering the Sacraments; I, in a great measure, recognise the Roman-Catholic liturgy, before it had lost its pristine simplicity by modern interpolation and new modelling.

"Our ecclesiastical polity was the platform on which that of the Church of England was laid. Our canon law is still, in a great measure, the rule of her judicatories. She has her spiritual consistorial courts, her decrees, her censures, from us. She has her subordinate church-government, her primates, her prelates, her archbishops and bishops, her deans, prebendaries, canons, and other dignitaries; her dioceses, parishes, cathedrals, and common churches; her benefices, her tithes, her perquisites, her Easter dues and free-will offerings; her very surplices, lawn sleeves, and

mitres—all from us. In these respects we are so resemblant, that other Protestant sects consider us as two sisters of the same family; which, like Ovid's sea-nymphs, have somewhat different traits of countenance, but not dissimilar faces; and on this account abuse them both alike."*

It is not my purpose, however, to set up any argument either for or against this practice, or to trace the history, which might easily be done, of the notion in the early ages,—wherein it appears, indeed, that prayers for the dead were in common use at a very early period of Christian antiquity; but where it will also appear that the notion of the possibility of acting upon the state of mind of the Deity, and the idea of an unfixed state that had not yet assumed an eternal form, were very prevalent, and essentially connected themselves with the custom of prayers for the dead, though they may not have exactly coincided with the Romish notion of purgatory. However that may be, I think I shall better conclude this lecture by adverting to the natural principles on which what there is of truth and of good in the practices both of churches and of individuals, of different descriptions, are founded; for there is generally, below the crust of a theological doctrine, a natural truth. However hard and harsh it may be—however absurd, in some particular view of it, it may appear—with whatever bigoted or superstitious notions it may be connected,—still, if we take the trouble to penetrate below all these, we shall find that it sprang originally from some simple and genuine impulse of the human heart—that there is still a soul of goodness in things evil—and that when we have sufficiently discussed the evil, especially if we can do any thing towards diminishing and superseding it, there is a remainder of good that may well repay the trouble, and that may minister that enjoyment which is not to be found in any kind of mere antagonism, however useful it may be for argument. The impulse to prayer is in man's nature; it exists anterior to all dogmas, to all rules of churches, to all prescriptions of form; it is the uplifting, as it were, of the finite to the Infinite; it is the sense of dependence, and the reference of dependence to power; it is the longing after and the clinging to something which rises in majesty before us, which spreads in grandeur around us, and with which we desire to be identified, as a portion of its works and as included in

* Geddes, pp. 31-37.

its mighty plan. Prayers may vary in their purpose—they may be degraded by absurd ceremonies—they may be low and base in their notions, in the objects of those by whom they are offered: they partake of man's nature; as they arise from it in the original impulse, so they partake of the different modifications to which it is joined in the individual. Prayer will be selfish in the selfish—it will be sordid in the sordid—it will be wild in the enthusiastic—it will be severe and damnatory in the bigoted; but it will also be generous in the generous—it will breathe the soul of resignation in the meek and placid mourner—it will ascend to the height of philanthropic fervour in those who are burning with desire to benefit their fellow-creatures—it will be philosophical with the philosophical—it will be calm, pure, and bold with minds that have learned, in their aspiring towards heaven, to look with complacency on that earth which is also God's work. We find that men have ever been impelled towards some form of prayer. As they learned to reason and to exercise their understandings, they got rid of the notion of acting upon a changing Deity, of enlightening Omniscience by their statements, of changing any thing essential to his great plan, whose schemes are still moving onward to their consummation: and thus their prayer became more the expression of complacency, savoured more of contemplation than their original petitions; and such is its best and purest state. But this, mingling with the idea of continued relation, which is also a natural impulse of man, led to the practice of praying for the dead. Where there is love in the heart, it cannot believe in annihilation. The forms of the departed will come back in visions at night—their voices will be heard upon the winds of heaven. Man cannot bring home to his own mind the notion of annihilation; the longing after immortality is so powerful in him, that it triumphs over whatever science can show him of dissolution, and anticipates the worth of that moral argument which is only developed in its force after ages of improvement and of civilisation: led to this, he builds his altar, and offers his commemorative rites—he looks onward from whatever state of being he is in to that which is to follow, and identifies himself also with that which has gone by. Thus there is filial piety in the history of the Jewish reli-

gion. Isaac worshiped the God of Abraham—Jacob adored the God of Isaac—Israel bowed the knee to the God of Jacob—and the people of Israel, through long generations, were accustomed to worship the God of their fathers: they knew he was the God, not of the dead, but of the living, and that all should live in him; and hence there was a bond between human beings in their common connection with the Divine One. Even paganism—paganism in its antagonism to Christianity—has felt this, and, pointing to the funeral fire, has said:

> "And when the embers fall away,
> And when the funeral flames arise,
> We'll journey to a home of rest,
> Our ancient gods, our ancient skies."

The feeling is substantially the same as that which pervades the most intense and Christian forms of devotion in reference to others and in reference to death, and in the spirit of which we see the Saviour promising to the dying thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Now, what is the business of tribunals of law, of courts, with feelings of this order?—what, but to let them alone—to let the impulses of nature pursue their own course—to let the father say of his child, "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me"—to let each, according to his conception of the state of the departed, look towards his own entrance there and his reunion with the loved one, and do what he may in praying or in praising that may have influence over their destiny, or that may gratify his own emotions without any such effect? There is a moral identity in all such language, uttered by the patriarch or the parent, with that uttered by the monarchs in the hades of the prophet, rising from their thrones in order to hail the tyrant of Babylon, as he too was to become like one of them. It indicates a sense of continuity—a continuity not of material existence, but of moral being and feeling—which we are led thus to prolong, and which should have its own free course to flow in whatsoever channel it will, in what direction soever it may delight.

Let the Indian bury with the corpse of his chieftain the bow and the hatchet, that they may serve him, as he thinks, in that other world, where he shall chase the deer in the

land of shadows—let the pagan anoint the corpse, and twine the wreath on its brow, and put the coin into its hand, that the dark ferryman may be paid as he bears it over the waters of oblivion—let the Celt throw his stone upon the cairn as he passes by—let the Catholic toll his bell, and say his masses, and sing his requiem—let those who will not pray *for* the dead, if they will, pray *over* them, and thus sanctify the sod by which they are covered—let all pursue the dictates of their feelings, whether it be simply to strew wild flowers on the grave, or to raise the costliest monument, with all the adornments that art can bestow upon it, for endearing the name of the individual—let each do it unmolested, doing a good and a true work according to his own conceptions, and drawing down upon it a divine benediction. He who prays—and there is prayer in the simplest action that I have described—there is prayer in hanging the wreath on the tombstone; and there is prayer also in the intense silence that confines its grief to its own bosom, and that makes the remainder of life only one long dirge—all are in a state of real prayer: the soul thus praying is with God and with those who are departed; and its state is a moral pledge of something more to come. As the plan is unfolded, one is the mystery of all these things—one is the mystery of life and of death, of God and of humanity, of time and of eternity—and that mystery is developed, not by the decrees of courts or by the definition of doctrines; but, by degrees, in the aspiring soul, as its anticipations are successively gratified in that long career to which it has been called by its Creator.

THE EVILS OF POVERTY.

December 23d, 1838.

The return of this season of the year—in fact, of this particular day, the Sunday before Christmas-day—has now for many years called me to a task which it is pleasant to fulfil in proportion to the sympathy which you show with my endeavours. It is a duty which I trust will never be neglected, until it is superseded by a more flourishing state of society, in which there shall not be those who need the regular recurrence of the charitable aid of their friends, neighbours, or fellow-parishioners. The duty of the morning is, that I should appeal to you on behalf of the poor connected with this congregation—some of them aged, some of them sick and infirm, and all of them needing in various ways that kind interposition which a number of persons, in the habit of thus assembling together, are able to make more efficiently by their agents, than, as individuals, they possibly could.

In bringing this subject before you through a long succession of years, I must, of necessity, recur, if not to the same topics, yet to topics of a similar nature. The one which I have now selected is a sort of counterpart to that which was the subject of the lecture on the same occasion last year. I then endeavoured to describe Christ as the friend of the poor; and, in doing so, to show the spirit of true friendship towards the poor—that it does not consist in that blind charity in which many are disposed to sum it up, and which has often done more harm than good—in that which takes simple giving as a good, without regard to circumstances or influences—by which, in many instances, the sinews of industrious exertion have been cut—by which the exercise of prudence and forethought has been

checked—by which, while temporary physical enjoyment or comfort has been bestowed, a permanent moral or intellectual evil has been entailed on the persons so aided, and even on the class to which they belong. It is not mere political friendship towards the poor that was designated by that title—that which teaches them to sum up all the ills they endure in the circumstance of their civil submission; or that which tells them to hope from sovereigns and parliaments, what sovereigns and parliaments, what laws and institutions, were never yet able to bestow, and which must be realised, if at all, by the exertions of individuals. Nor do I reckon as genuine friendship for the poor, the religious zeal which is continually manifested, which postpones all other considerations to indoctrinating them with the propositions of a particular creed, which reckons as spiritual good, and therefore as combining all other good, that which, in fact, merely makes them partisans or formalists or superstitious, and which sometimes operates as a strong bribe to hypocrisy. In none of these ways do we see that friendship towards the poor which is analogous to what is exemplified in the life and conduct of Christ.

In describing him on that occasion as the friend of the poor, I adverted to the circumstance that he was born in poverty: he dignified the condition. If we take the common notion of the person of Christ—if we suppose him to be Deity united with human feelings and a human spirit—what a grand idea does it convey of the care of the Almighty and Eternal God, of his regard to this so often despised condition of humanity, that poverty was selected for the incarnation of the Deity! while, if we conceive of him as one raised up and trained by Providence to be the teacher and guide of humanity—if we look upon him as the brother of the human race, the first-born among many brethren—if we regard him as treading his arduous and painful course, that the record might be a permanent encouragement to those who suffer in well-doing, that from his meekness and holiness they might learn the needful lesson of endurance, that from his energy and determination they might learn to persevere in every good work, whether relating to their own condition and character or to the well-being of others,—if we consider him as thus identified with the human race, and raising it towards the condition of the moral children

of God, still we find poverty exalted and honoured by the fact of his being in that condition—we see it, as it were, identified with the spirit of Christianity.

He was born and trained in poverty; he had, therefore, a feeling of identification with those whose destiny it is to toil—to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; he had that oneness of spirit with them which it is, perhaps, impossible for those to attain who are born in a different sphere. He was not their condescending patron—he was not one looking down from a more exalted region, and endeavouring to elevate them towards himself. He naturally had unity of mind and heart with them, could enter into all their feelings, knew personally their privations. He laboured, as we have reason to believe, by inference from scripture and by early tradition, at his father's business as a carpenter, in his early youth, with his own hands. When he came into the world, he associated with the poor—he spoke not as one delivering commands, but as one who, from the common feelings of the common human heart, uttered those simple, those elementary, those everlasting truths, which have wrought their way to men's hearts in all countries and through all ages. We find this circumstance characterising the whole course of his public ministry. They were the poor who consorted together to hear him; on them his wonderful works were wrought, to them his most remarkable discourses were addressed; they hailed him triumphantly, when he entered into Jerusalem, as a Heaven-authorised reformer; he was blended with the poor in his life, in his exertions, and in his death; and when his religion was sent forth into all the world, the fishermen and peasants of Galilee were the appointed messengers who bore it to the nations of the earth, and who every where addressed themselves to the multitude—to win them pre-eminently and especially to a religion that taught the universal brotherhood of man.

The spirit, the true Christian spirit, of friendship for the poor having been thus delineated on that occasion, the counterpart is that which I have announced as the subject of this lecture, namely, the wants of the poor—that is, of the objects of friendship, the objective aims of the friendship whose character I then attempted to delineate; for it is needful for us not only to cherish a certain disposition

within our bosoms—not only to define the particular feelings and principles which we wish to cultivate—but also to regard their outward manifestation, to inquire what are the ways, what are the purposes, to which this good will is to be directed? what are the evils that, by its energetic exertion, are to be removed?—and here, when we look around on all the attributes of poverty, whether we regard its condition physically, intellectually, or morally, we find scarcely any thing else to do than to mark a catalogue of evils. The condition of poverty is one great want; it is privation in every way in which human nature can be regarded, beginning with the lowest and simplest necessaries of life, until we arrive at those higher elements of character, in which the presence or absence of a certain state of mind shows the being to be realising the noblest purposes of his existence, or parting from them most foully and wretchedly.

Take the condition of poverty physically. Is not a large proportion of the people of this country ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, placed in such external physical circumstances as must pain the eye and the heart in their contemplation? How can it be otherwise? Where are their means, their resources? To enter into the nature and causes of this condition were too large an inquiry for the present discussion. I impute not praise or blame; let these be as they may. It may be that, in some measure, this state of things is owing to the poor themselves; it may be that they do not well and wisely apply the means they are possessed of; it may be that there is, in their mode of living, as much running to waste proportionately as there is amongst those who live in a far more luxurious external manner; it may be that they might, by coöperation, cause their scanty pittance to produce a much larger sum of individual comfort and of enjoyment; it may be that the blame is, in some measure, to be ascribed to those who are immediately above them,—that it is to be traced to a grasping and oppressive spirit, to a desire, without regard to the feelings of our nature, to make the most money that can be made by any particular relation of master and servant, of employer and labourer; it may be that even the injudicious, erring charity of those immediately above them helps to increase, instead of mitigating, the

mischief; it may be that no small portion of blame is to be ascribed to legislation, to the operation of the laws, which in this country, as in all others, are made by the propertied classes, and which sacrifice, in too many instances, the interests of humanity to what are supposed to be the interests of property;—but, whatever be the reason, the fact is evident: and it is also clear that such must be the fact, if we look only at the common resources which are possessed by the country. For what are the revenues of the population, if we take the whole annual income of the country, as derived from all sources whatsoever—as it is realised by the inheritors of wealth, as it accrues from the interest which is paid to the national creditors, as it is received by professional men in the form of fees, and by the merchant and the manufacturer in the form of profits, and as it comes to the classes that toil in the form of wages?—if, I say, we take the whole amount, the whole income of the country, and divide it by the amount of the population, what is the result, what is the average income of each individual? About 17*l.* per annum, or 7*s.* per week—a fact which may bring the truth home to our minds, that a rich nation may yet be a nation of poor individuals; that countries which, as a people, are the objects of attention to all the world for the abundance of their wealth, may yet, when we look at the condition of the great mass of the population, be below those which are equally the objects of general attention for being poor countries, but where a different division of the means of support gives to each man more ample resources for realising that which is desirable for himself and those who are dependent upon his exertions. For, when we consider the immense amount of property which some classes possess—when we consider how many thousand times the average annual income is possessed by individuals in the upper grades of society—what can be our conception of those who are thus necessarily thrown below the average, and who must constitute so large a portion of the entire people? Why, the amount which I named as what would be the average amount, if the whole resources of the country were equally divided, is all that some receive for themselves and their families too; that 7*s.* or 8*s.* a week is what at this moment we find, by the current intelligence of the day, to be not an uncommon rate of

wages, in many of the agricultural counties, for those who have four, five, six, or seven others dependent upon them: and that, too, at a time when, in their locality, flour is selling for 9*s*. 6*d*. a bushel. Now, is it not unavoidable, in such a state of things, that there should be a fearful amount of physical suffering—that there should be a fearful privation even of the means of daily food to many and many thousands? Is it not dreadful that, even at this time, the inhabitants of the neighbouring island should be rising in mobs to prevent the exportation of potatoes, their staple means of sustenance—which are coming to this country on account of the rise in price here; that they should behold their means of support thus taken away from them, thus leaving their country, while they have before them the prospect of starvation! No wonder that ignorance breaks out into violence under such circumstances. The wonder is that the power of the law and the chains of society are strong enough to retain peace and order at all under such circumstances.

I do not mean, however, in the discussion of this subject, to endeavour to act upon your feelings by any particular delineations of this kind. I wish merely to look at what must be the condition of the people generally, and to glance at the extent of privation and of want which are implied in the very term "poverty." It cannot but be, in any society in the condition which I have described, whatever the wealth of some, that others, if not left unhoused, are but imperfectly sheltered from the varying temperature of the seasons, —it cannot but be that their abodes should be dark, dirty, and inconvenient—that the localities in which they are placed should be such as tend to the permanent generation of disease—that infancy should lack its proper nutriment, and commence its life under circumstances so unfavourable as to crush the first blossoms of humanity,—it cannot but be that early labour should be enforced, whatever may be the parental feelings, and that the frame, bowed down by early toil, should become weak and decrepit and deformed, and lose its proper elasticity, and never arrive at the real physical development of humanity,—it cannot but be that there should be the absence of that kindly feeling that should ever melt the heart, and make it the abode of virtue, of loveliness, and of good—that hard selfishness or fierce defiance

should become the prevailing tone and temper of those who are brought under circumstances so unfavourable—that, as they advance in life, coarse and gross enjoyment should be all of which they are susceptible, tending to plunge them yet further in deprivation, and, it may be, into crime, until they fulfil their course prematurely, swept off by want or disease before their time—death, endless death, stalking amongst their hovels, and leaving only the melancholy prospect of the reproduction of similar generations, the perpetuation of humanity in the form where the image of its Creator is all but obliterated!

Look at poverty intellectually,—I speak of its mental condition as a want, though it may not be a want that is felt by the individual: it is on that account only a more grievous want. The cry for knowledge is likely to be but faint where the cry for bread is prevalent. It is useless to talk of strengthening the mind while the body is enfeebled for lack of food. It is vain to talk of the imagination expatiating in literary or poetical enjoyment while the system lacks that which should renew its spirits—which should revive it from morning to morning, and send it forth with briskness and alacrity to achieve its daily task. The want must needs be an unfelt one; and the deeper is that want. But is it not strange, is it not disgraceful, that in a country where every institution is professedly built upon Christian principles,—the principles of that Christianity which teaches that "all we are brethren, and one is our Father in heaven,"—a system should continue that makes no provision for the education of the people—that does not, whatever may be their physical condition, insure for infancy and for youth, universally, throughout all ranks and classes, something of that instruction which is the best mental aliment, and by which alone minds can grow up into their proper dimensions, arrive at their natural strength, and fulfil their appointed course upon the earth? What is the present system but, in fact, one of destructiveness—one of continued privation, of continual destroying, of the human intellect? It is the murder of the mind. We keep in our calendar the day of the Massacre of the Innocents. Why, here is a massacre of innocents annually perpetrated; here are souls, capable of unfolding their faculties, of developing all the varied powers of humanity, that are condemned to

what is worse even than the nonentity of intelligence—condemned to that sort of depravity, of perversity of soul, that makes us turn from them, and almost sigh that such beings are made upon the earth—doomed to a state in which they are only the external monuments, the whited sepulchres, of living spirits, for whom God prepared this fair and beautiful world! In no other respect is capability so much neglected. It has been ascertained of late, and the discovery has excited some sensation, that in our East-Indian territories there are huge forests of the tea-tree, and, forthwith, plans are devised for its cultivation: it is to be turned to account; these forests are eventually to supersede our present relations with China; they are regarded as a grand discovery; and mercantile speculation already sees in them the germ of future wealth, and the multiplication of the conveniences and enjoyments of the people of this empire. And yet whole forests of men—of men whose minds are capable of being trained to the reception of knowledge, to the enjoyment of the truths of philosophy, to the imbibing of the principles of morality, and to all the loftiness of religion—these are neglected—these are left to wither: there they stand, blighted or blasted, as the case may be; neglected, or only used as so much material, so much machinery of bone and sinew, without any reference to that which should distinguish them from brutes. It has been said, in reference to the productions of tropical climates, that, though their gaudy flowers and gigantic vegetable productions will not flourish here, yet—

> "Man is the nobler growth our realms supply,
> And souls are ripened in our northern sky."

But ill do our regions deserve that commendation while the cultivating and ripening, the grandeur and enjoyment, are confined to the few; and the many are left unheeded and unattended to, bearing no fruit, and becoming only a nuisance to the land which they encumber. Yet it is said of these persons, and to them, from Sunday to Sunday, in church and out of church—it is said by our preachers—that they and we are brethren, that they are brethren with the most enlightened, with the highest, and with the noblest of the human race. Why, what an insult is the term "brotherhood," applied in such a connection, and with the duties of

society, its great duty of universal instruction, all unfulfilled! "Brotherhood," indeed! The "brotherhood" of the poor, ignorant, starving wretch of the field or of the factory—his "brotherhood" to Locke, and Bacon, and Newton, and Milton, and Sydney, and all that have adorned our country! The words seem uttered but in scorn. "Brotherhood" implies something like similarity of advantage, of privilege, of acquirement—it implies common affection and common obligation—it implies that something is done to raise brother to the level of brother, to a similar mental and moral elevation, and thus to give reality to that which is now only a vain term or a gross insult.

Take the condition of the poor morally—look at it in that social preparation which is the best source of morality. How is goodness to grow in human nature? It is not catechised into nature—it is not hammered into the human mind by precept and dogma. Goodness grows, if it grow at all, amid the early charities of life,—the reception of benefits from those more aged, or the bestowment of benefits on those more young,—the interchange of mutual kindness, doing good not only within one's own circle, but beyond one's own circle; goodness grows like the plant, it cannot be formed and hammered into fashion like a portion of copper by a blacksmith: and how is goodness to grow in hearts such as I have been describing, which deserve not the name, and have nothing of the substance? how is goodness, how is morality, to thrive, when society is thus immersed in hard selfishness, struggling against the pressure of the day, and seeking with might and main to gain that food which, in common parlance, may just keep body and soul together? Not thus has goodness ever been cherished, nor can it be so cherished: it lacks its proper soil, it lacks its proper nutriment, and the cultivation by which only it can be fostered.

Take the poor politically. Whatever their ignorance, they have learned that they are members of society. The cry of men's rights is abroad in the world, and their ears cannot be stopped against it. It may be asked, Are those who are subject to these privations fit to govern? I say, No; nor are those fit to govern whose schemes have brought them to such a condition. There is, at least, a parity of incapacity; and if they be not fit to govern, it can scarcely be said that they are fit to be told so,—that they are fit to be told

that, having the power of numbers at least, their destiny is to remain slaves, and to have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them, and to receive in those laws whatever impositions other classes may choose to place upon the poor. For this they are at least as unfit as for the other; and the best way of grappling with the question of fitness or unfitness, is to adapt all the intellectual machinery the country can command to enlighten their minds, and to apply the great principles of justice, of universal justice, to the recognition of their rights.

Look at them religiously. How can there be religion in such a state, unless it be a sort of Manichean religion, that regards the world as divided between a good principle and an evil one, God and the devil struggling together; and the evil principle too often obtaining the advantage. They are not surrounded with associations, with inducements, with suggestions, that should raise their minds to any thing like real religion: it must be foreign from such abodes as theirs, nor can it be naturalised by artificial agency. Religion yet more than goodness is the growth of a combination of circumstances, which are presupposed for its existence. Let men's kindly feelings have been called forth in youth, let their honest exertions be fairly recompensed, let life come to them with some of the adornments and accompaniments that make it life to live, let their intellects be stimulated, be called forth to exercise on worthy topics, let not their eyes become strangers from the sight of heaven by being continually drawn down to the earth, in order to discern that root on which they may feed to avoid the day's starvation,—let them be free from those chains, and then men will grow religious, as naturally as the tree puts forth its foliage and bears its fruit. Religion is the ultimate result, the highest elevation, the crown of all; and in this way must we arrive at it in order to find it spreading over the surface of the nation, and making a religious and a Christian people. It is of no avail to build churches, and provide free seats for their accommodation—it is of no avail to institute home missions, and send doctrines to their very doors—it is of no avail to storm them with tracts and catechisms, or even to pelt them with Bibles—while they need the daily food of the body, and are ill disposed, by the lack of that, to apply themselves to spiritual nutriment. In all these ways you may provide

excuses for taxation upon the country—you may furnish materials for the gratification of the spiritual pride of proselytism—you may cause, to a certain extent, different names and classifications to be adopted, and you may make the poorest and the most ignorant swear by this or that leader in the armies of theology, and consider themselves enlisted under this or that sectarian banner; but you do not make a religious people—you do not infuse into them those modes of thought, that degree of feeling, that elevation of character, which must be built up—must be gradually, slowly, extensively, and yet surely built up—by the development of the various faculties of our nature, until, in their unfolding, they reflect the image of their Author, and recognise that Author with appropriate emotions and with no unworthy thoughts.

When untaxed bread and better-paid labour allow to the toiling classes a more ample sufficiency of the means of physical support—when the gradual sense of the power of coöperation, and of the value of household comfort, lead them to a better use of the narrow means which they possess—when early youth is no longer necessarily lashed to its toil, while yet its tender limbs are wholly unfitted for such rough work—when a system of education, the best for all classes, and brought home to all classes, shall fan into a flame every spark of intelligence that exists throughout the land—when the recognition of social rights shall allay the heartburning of discontent—when friendly relations with their fellow-creatures shall make love take the place of hard selfishness—when character shall expand and grow under such influences,—then will the people become religious, then will religion, then will the real spirit of Christianity, be more extensively and certainly diffused than they ever have been by Church establishments, than they ever can be by the most zealous missionaries.

This is but a mournful catalogue of suffering, and I can do little or nothing else than put the catalogue before you. It is not for individuals, by a single act, to dream of grappling with such a mass of mischief as this; and yet it must not be regarded as a necessity imposed upon the world by Providence. I cannot believe that. The benediction originally bestowed on creation has not been withdrawn. The lot of man has ever been progressive. In proportion as evils have been understood, have they been struggled with;

and, when perseveringly struggled with, they have always given way. I believe that there are symptoms of a future condition of society in which what I have described shall be most essentially mitigated, if not altogether superseded. What is to be done by each and by all to hasten that time can be told, though not very definitely. The real remedy for the mischiefs of poverty lies, I believe, in the simple discharge of the duty and pursuit of truth by all others. We have only to act justly, we have only to see things fairly, we have only to cultivate the most elementary principles of the most elementary virtues, in order to do something towards changing and elevating the spirit of society. Let there be no injustice, let not wealth be overrated, let not humanity be deemed an object of indifference to us, let dogmas and arbitrary maxims be rated at their proper worth, let each pursue faithfully and honestly his own course—let him adorn his own character with whatever belongs to virtue and to Christianity—let there be religion in his own heart, the religion of love to God and of love to man,—let such be the guidance of all actions in what relates to society, and those who pursue such a course will lay the axe to the root of this tree of corruption, and do the best that can be done for diminishing the evils of poverty; for the evils of poverty are simply the evils of short-sighted, selfish interest—the evils of a disregard of justice—the evils of unfairly treating the human intellect, and of its non-development in society at large. As society corrects itself in these matters, it abates the most formidable nuisance of poverty.

But let us leave these general views for the particular object of this lecture. We are told of the philosopher of old that, gazing on the lights of heaven, he unawares fell into a ditch. The lights of heaven never taught the philosopher that lesson—they never taught him to disregard the ground beneath his feet. Those lights shine upon the earth with all its diversities; they guide the course of the mariner o'er the pathless ocean, and that of the Indian through trackless wastes; they shed the lustre of colour and of brightness and of beauty on all the productions of this lower world—they glow even in the dewdrop; they remind us that, in the large and abstract view of society, we are not to forget the pressure of individual sorrow, not to neglect the exercise of particular

charity. Coldness and disregard of such an occasion as this morning brings before you do not harmonise with large conceptions of man's condition, with extensive views of the mischiefs of poverty, with sincere desires for the amelioration of society; the largest truths and grandest principles may fitly blend with feelings that can be filled with sympathy for any particular case of distress, with the impulse that directs the hand in ready and glad alacrity to minister its mite and its assistance. This, then, I invite you to do. This season of the year reminds us of Him who was born in poverty, but who lived to bestow blessings on the rich and the poor of the human race, which will last so long as the human race shall endure;—and, naturally, the season when the pressure of poverty and its manifold inconveniences are more severely felt than at any other time, should lead you to sustain the practice, which I trust will never be discontinued in this congregation, of kindly and liberally contributing something for those who, connected with us in our general views and in our religious feelings, should also be connected with us by the tie that binds together reciprocally charity and the objects of its care. The very circumstance which diminishes, perhaps, the number of those whom I am now addressing,—the unfavourable state of the weather,—increases the motive that should be felt by all and by each. Let not the difference fall on those who should be the objects of kindness—let them not feel it in diminished assistance; rather do you feel it in increased liberality.

END OF VOL. XI.

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